GARDEN PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Happy days

Celebrate summer with
6 glorious gardens

Amazing all year

30 plants with interest in every season

GOLDEN GLOBES

New alliums that flower in summer

War of the roses

The world's top rosarian on sharing his garden

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Welcome

JOHN CAMPBELL

Summer is finally here and we have decided to celebrate its arrival this issue by bringing you six glorious gardens to enjoy. First, we visit the iconic rooms of Sissinghurst Castle at peak rose-blooming time (page 28), and get to look behind the scenes at how head gardener Troy Scott Smith and his team keep it looking so enchanting.

There are more roses on show in the garden of Michael Marriott (page 72), the expert rosarian, who shares his outdoor space with his partner, horticultural TV producer Rosie Irving. They tell us how they manage to divide the space and maintain harmony despite differing gardening styles. Michael also offers fantastic tips that bust some myths around caring for roses.

Our other gardens include a magical new gravel garden and meadow planting around an old chapel in the Cotswolds, designed by Marian Boswall (page 44); the colourful naturalistic garden of Ann-Maree Winter in Australia (page 88); a contemporary design for a former walled garden in Suffolk by designer Colm Joseph (page 62); and a sleek modern courtyard conversion by Angus Thompson (page 98).

We've got plenty of plants too, with Lowther head gardener Andrea Brunsendorf sharing her ten plant picks for June (page 16), and Benjamin Pope recommending the best varieties of the new herbaceous-style alliums that flower all through summer (page 54), plus Matthew Biggs chooses 30 hard-working plants that will bring year-round interest to your garden (page 80).

Stephanie Mahon

STEPHANIE MAHON, EDITOR

ONLINE THIS MONTH

Book your ticket now to our exclusive reader event at Sissinghurst with Troy Scott Smith on the evening of Sunday 16 June.
gardensillustrated.com/sissinghurst-event

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Allium 'Millennium' is one of the relatively new varieties of allium that flower through summer, page 54.

JASON INGRAM

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JUNE 2024

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JOHN CAMPBELL

Discover how Sissinghurst's Rose Garden is kept looking fabulously romantic throughout June, page 28.

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COVER IMAGE

Suffolk garden designed by Colm Joseph, photograph by Richard Bloom (page 62)

ON THE COVER

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Amazing all year, page 80

EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 26
- Join us for an after-hours guided tour of the gardens at Sissinghurst with head gardener Troy Scott Smith– page 39

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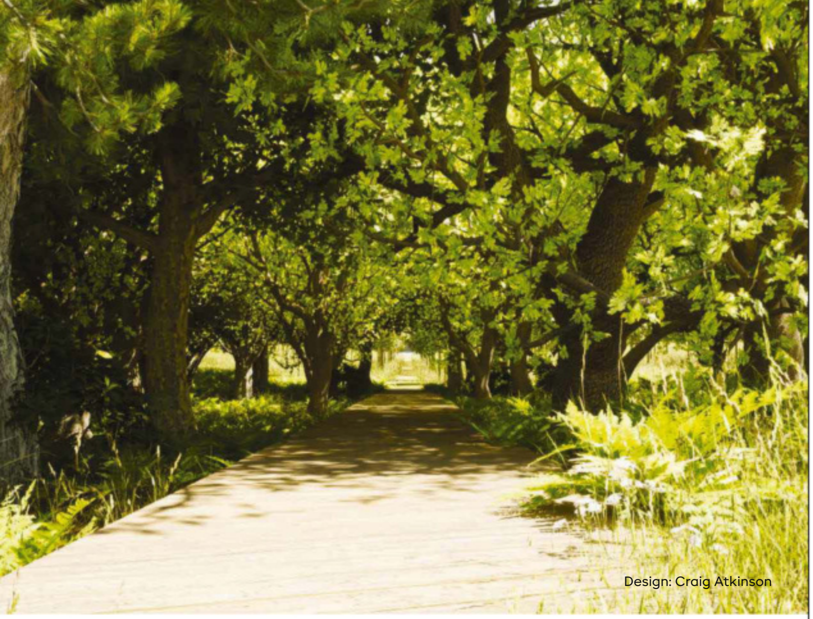

Design: Craig Atkinson

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“I appreciated the interaction with fellow designers and being able to share our experience. AG

Design: Craig Atkinson

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Contributors

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

RACHEL WARNE

Benjamin Pope
Head gardener Benjamin chooses the best summer alliums, page 54. *“It’s great to see these later alliums making their mark in our summer gardens, enriching displays with flower and foliage.”*

Matthew Biggs
Matthew recommends 30 excellent plants for year-round interest, page 80. *“Every garden needs plants that provide several seasons of interest and it was challenging to reduce this to relatively few.”*

Rachel Warne
Rachel photographs a clever courtyard garden, page 98. *“Angus has created a garden of solace and calm. Only the hum of pollinators and the ripple of water could be heard.”*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Charlotte Harris
Charlotte co-founded the values-driven landscape design practice Harris Bugg Studio with Hugo Bugg in 2017. She has won three Gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, as well as Best Show Garden in 2023.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993 and is now CEO of the garden’s Charitable Trust. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design, a practice for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best Show Garden in 2017.

Anna Pavord
Anna was *The Independent*’s gardening correspondent for 30 years and is the author of the bestselling book *The Tulip*. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK’s best-known garden designers. Among his many award-winning gardens is the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan. He was awarded an OBE in the 2022 New Year Honours for services to horticulture.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK’s most sought-after garden designers. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012, 2018 and 2023, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Membership and subscription enquiries and back issues

UK 03330 162114
USA/CANADA +1 888-941-5623 (TOLL-FREE)
REST OF THE WORLD +44 1604 973722
EMAIL gardensillustrated@ourmediashop.com
UK/REST OF THE WORLD *Gardens Illustrated*, PO Box 3320,
3 Queensbridge, Northampton NN4 7BF.
USA/CANADA *Gardens Illustrated*, PO Box 40, Williamsport, PA 17703 USA.

Advertising enquiries

+44 (0)117 300 8547 rebecca.janyshiwskyj@ourmedia.co.uk

Editorial enquiries

+44 (0)117 300 8622 gardens@gardensillustrated.com
Gardens Illustrated, Our Media Ltd,
Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST.

Syndication & Licensing

Gardens Illustrated is available for licensing and syndication.
+44 (0)117 300 8787, emma.brunt@ourmedia.co.uk

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS

EDITORIAL

Editor	Stephanie Mahon
Art director	David Grenham
Deputy art editor	Niki Goss
Production editor	Juliet Giles
Digital editor	Daisy Bowie-Sell
Commissioning content editor	Veronica Peerless
Content producer	Molly Blair
Botanical adviser	Dr James Compton
Thanks this issue	Tim Bates

ADVERTISING

Group advertising director	Gino De Antonis
Advertising manager	Rebecca Janyshiwskyj 0117 300 8547 rebecca.janyshiwskyj@ourmedia.co.uk
Commercial brand lead	Kelly Warden 0117 300 8538 kelly.warden@ourmedia.co.uk
Advertising designers	Andrew Hobson and Cee Pike

INSERTS

Laurence Robertson	+353 (0)876 902208

CIRCULATION, MARKETING, PROMOTIONS, PRESS & PR

Newstrade manager	John Lawton
Subscriptions director	Jacky Perales-Morris
Direct marketing manager	Aimee Rhymer
Buyer	Karen Flannigan

MANAGEMENT

Chief executive officer	Andy Marshall
Managing director	Andrew Davies
Head of brand marketing and brand lead	Rosa Sherwood

SYNDICATION & LICENSING

Director of licensing & syndication	Tim Hudson, tim.hudson@immediate.co.uk
Head of licensing	Tom Shaw, tom.shaw@immediate.co.uk
Head of syndication	Richard Bentley, richard.bentley@immediate.co.uk

PRODUCTION

Production director	Sarah Powell
Group production manager	Louisa Molter
Production co-ordinator	Lauren Morris

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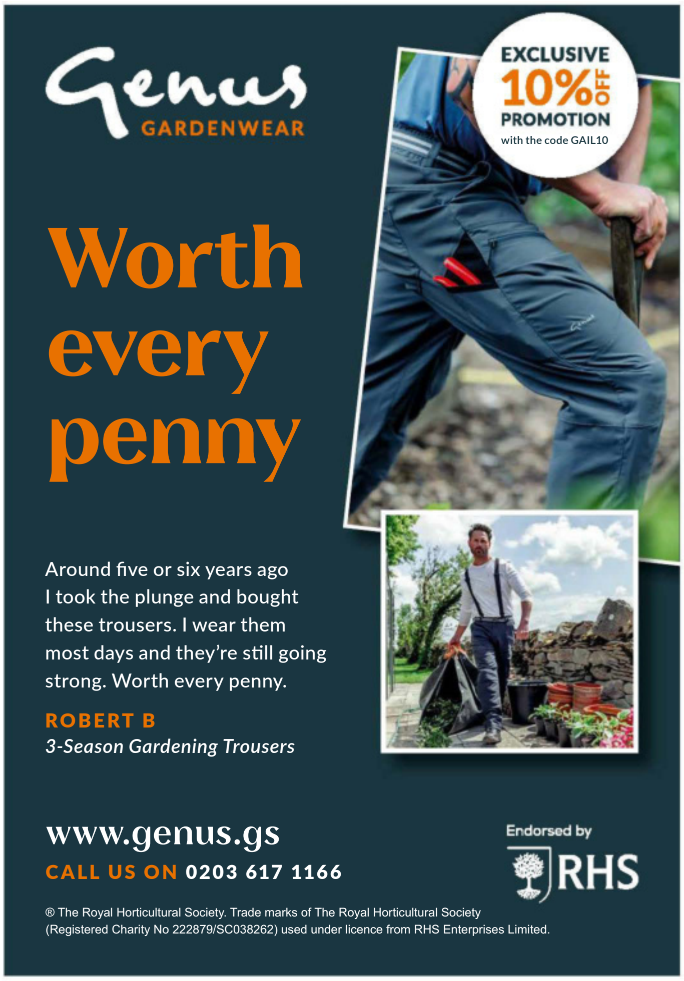
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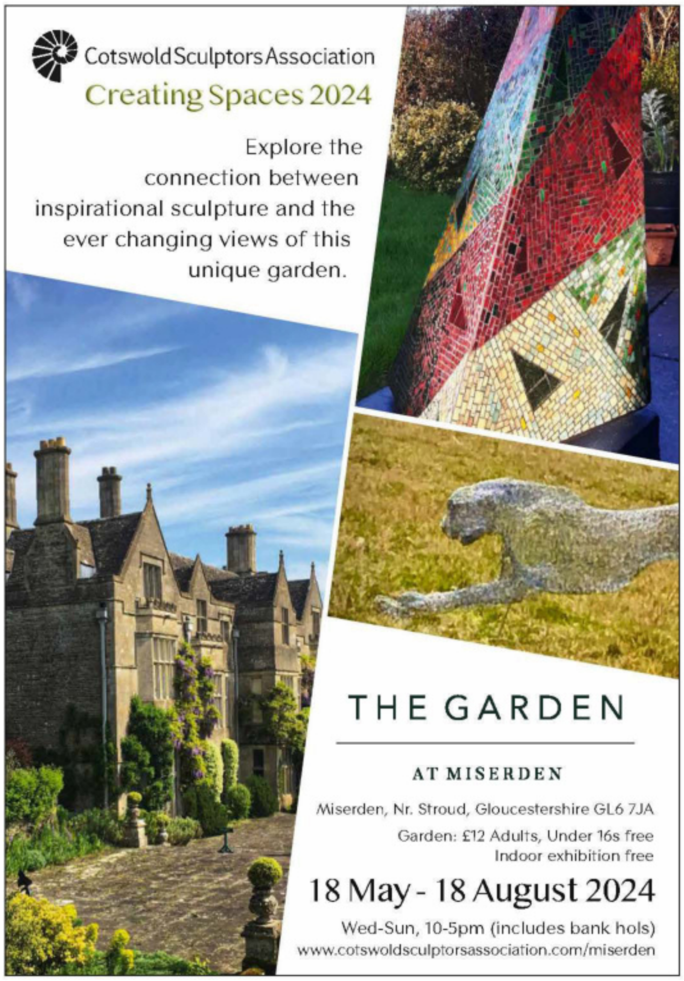
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DIG IN

What's new, what's growing and what's going on this month

NEWS COMPILED BY MOLLY BLAIR

FESTIVAL

FLORAL FLOURISH

Since its launch in 2013, British Flowers Week – the annual celebration of seasonal, British-grown flowers – has been organised by New Covent Garden Flower Market. This year, however, it is passing the baton to Flowers from the Farm, the association that brings together more than 1,000 flower farmers across the UK. It promises to be the same glorious celebration of all things floral, with London's Garden Museum once again inviting some of the country's top floral designers to create showstopping installations around the museum, and flower-filled workshops, demonstrations and other events will be taking place at locations around the UK.
3-9 June. **britishflowersweek.com**

ANDREA GILPIN

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Talking point

SHOULD WE LEAVE IVY ALONE?

Ivy is a common sight in UK gardens and landscapes – scrambling up walls, covering ground and climbing trees. It has myriad benefits for wildlife, providing food and shelter to all manner of creatures from butterflies to bats. It grows almost anywhere; however, fondness for this wild plant is not exactly widespread.

In a recent survey of *Gardens Illustrated* readers, many told us that they thought it was destructive and too hard to keep under control. Common fears included that it would damage walls and fences and smother trees.

Katy Merrington, cultural gardener at the Hepworth Wakefield Garden, feels differently. "People are funny about ivy," she says. "I have a lot of friends and family who when they move house talk to me about their garden and they'll say, the first thing we've got to do is chop down this big load of ivy. And I always think, why do you need to chop it down? Unless it's actually making a wall structurally unsafe because it's fully entered into the mortar, I mean. Because when you think about it ivy is one of the ultimate plants. It can live in sun or shade. The RHS says that it supports more than 140 species of insects and 17 species of birds. It's probably Britain's only evergreen clinging climber, so I think it's beautiful. I think we need to love ivy. And so, I would encourage it."

Find more expert opinion on ivy by scanning the QR code with your phone camera or head to **gardensillustrated.com/ivy**

• Hear more from Katy in the new season of our *Talking Gardens* podcast. Episode released on 28 May. Available wherever you get your podcasts.

OUT & ABOUT

Fun of the festival

A new garden festival at Borde Hill Gardens in West Sussex, this June, offers the chance to browse gardening and lifestyle stalls, attend garden tours and live demonstrations, and enjoy talks from Cath Kidston, Michael Marriott and floral designer Graeme Corbett of Bloom & Burn, as well as sample food and drink from local pop-ups. On Saturday, 22 June, join *Gardens Illustrated* editor Stephanie Mahon for a panel discussion with Jo Thompson, Jinny Blom, and Alice and Maddie Bailey of Forest London. Day tickets start at £15, and *Gardens Illustrated* Members enjoy a 20 per cent discount on entry tickets. 22-23 June, 10am-5pm. **bordehill.co.uk**

PLANTS

WILD ABOUT FLOWERS

Countryfile presenter Adam Henson has launched a range of wildflower seeds, with the aim of transforming landscapes into thriving havens for biodiversity. Inspired by the wildflowers that grow on his farm, Adam hopes to encourage others to take an active role in restoring and enhancing the environment around them. The five mixes on offer are Annual Bloom, Pollinator Paradise, Marvellous Meadow, Shade Splendour and Wetland Wonder and prices start at £5.99. Available from Adam's new online store **wildscapeuk.com**

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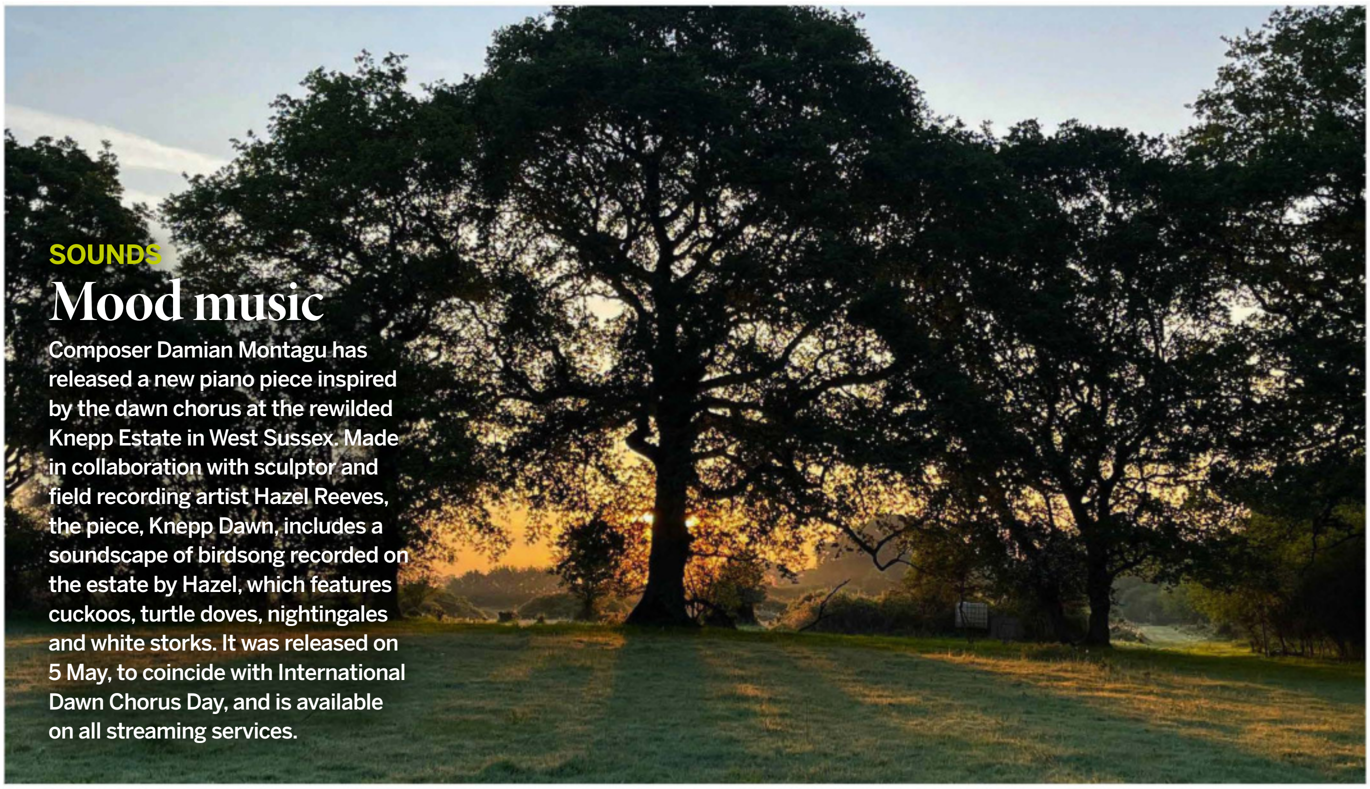

SOUNDS

Mood music

Composer Damian Montagu has released a new piano piece inspired by the dawn chorus at the rewilded Knepp Estate in West Sussex. Made in collaboration with sculptor and field recording artist Hazel Reeves, the piece, Knepp Dawn, includes a soundscape of birdsong recorded on the estate by Hazel, which features cuckoos, turtle doves, nightingales and white storks. It was released on 5 May, to coincide with International Dawn Chorus Day, and is available on all streaming services.

HAZEL REEVES

APPAREL

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Genus has launched a new pair of hard-working trousers for 2024. Designed to keep gardeners dry, warm and comfortable all day, the ProPant features include adjustable knee pads, shower-resistant durable fabric and multiple pockets of varying sizes. The Genus ProPant costs £220 and is available from ***genus.gs***

WHAT TO DO IN… *JUNE*

JASON INGRAM

8

Royal Windsor Flower Show Visit Windsor Great Park for a day celebrating gardening, nature and cookery, opened by honorary president Alan Titchmarsh. Saturday 8 June, 10am-6pm. £21. Windsor Great Park SL4 2BS. **rwrhs.com**

CLIVE NICHOLS GARDEN PICTURES

10-14

A Celebration of Flowers Join nurserywoman Claire Austin as she celebrates 25 years at her nursery. Various events across the week. Claire Austin Hardy Plants, White Hopton Farm, Wern Lane, Sarn, Newtown SY16 4EN. Tel 01686 670342. **claire austin-hardyplants.co.uk**

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11

Paper Parrot Tulips Learn how to transform crepe paper into everlasting parrot tulips on this one-day course. Tuesday 11 June, 10am-4pm. £130. Leighton Lodge, Leighton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 6RN. Tel 07769 707717, **mastertheart.uk**

DESIGN

NATURAL SETTING

Stefano Boeri Architetti China has won a competition to create a new technology museum in Xi'an, the capital of Chinese province of Shaanxi. On the roof of the museum, the team has designed a hanging garden that will tie the development to the park on the north side of the site. Planting will include *Ginkgo biloba*, *Acer pictum* and *Pinus bungeana* as well as shrubs and perennials selected to emulate the local Chinese landscape. A system of terraces will allow visitors to climb the building, gaining new vantage points to view the surrounding landscape, as well as offering people new outdoor spaces. **stefanoboeriarchitetti.net**

PRODUCT

Saving water

Hartley Botanic has released a new range of aluminium water butts in a stylish design that can be powder coated to match its greenhouses. Offering gardeners an aesthetically pleasing as well as practical option for collecting rainwater, the range comes in two sizes – 167-litre and 88-litre (shown) – with prices available on enquiry. For more information, visit **hartley-botanic.co.uk**

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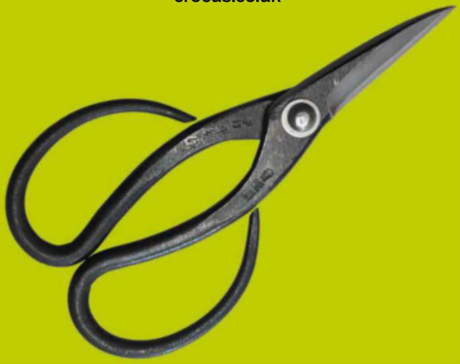

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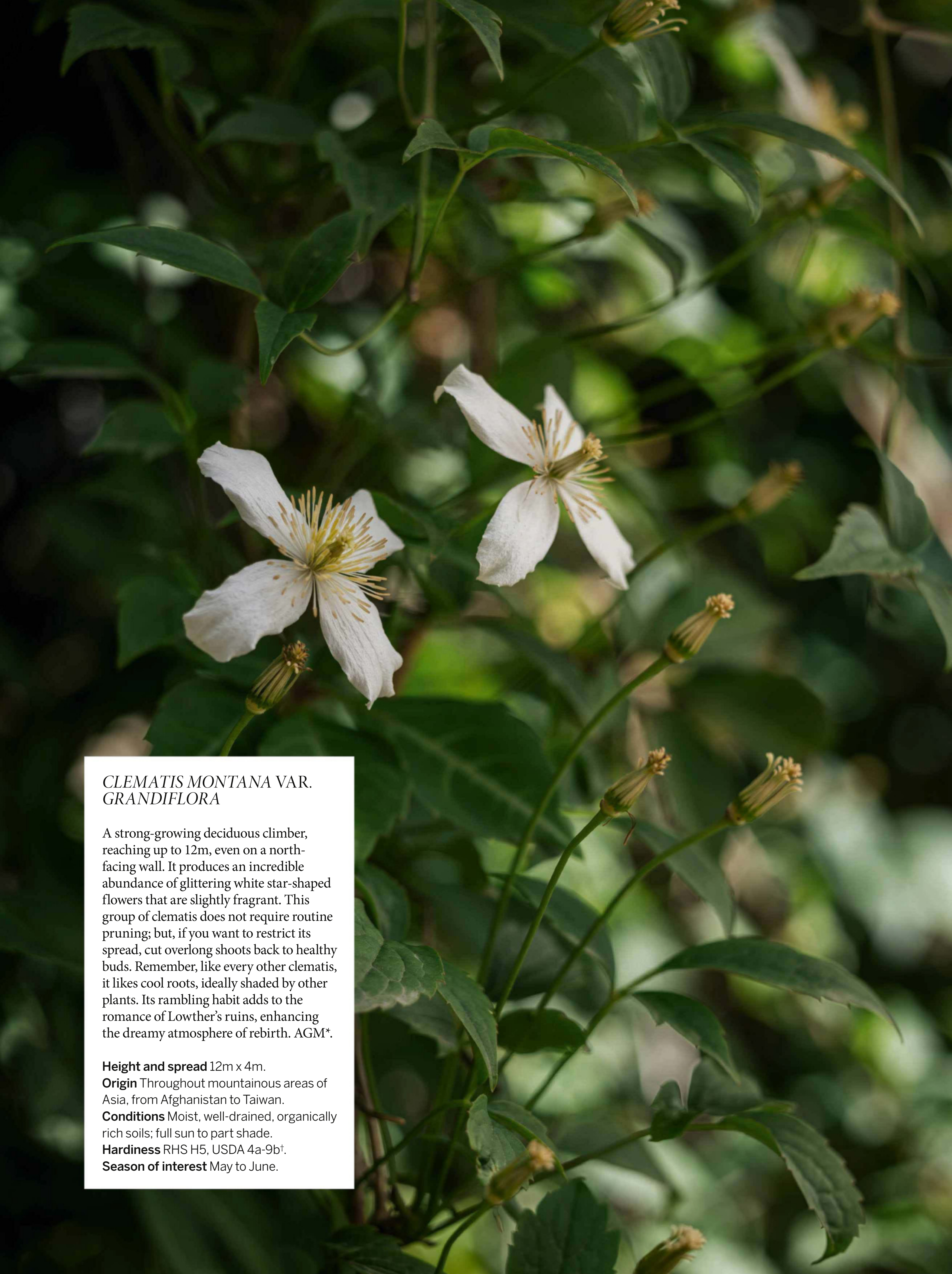


CLEMATIS MONTANA VAR. *GRANDIFLORA*

A strong-growing deciduous climber, reaching up to 12m, even on a north-facing wall. It produces an incredible abundance of glittering white star-shaped flowers that are slightly fragrant. This group of clematis does not require routine pruning; but, if you want to restrict its spread, cut overlong shoots back to healthy buds. Remember, like every other clematis, it likes cool roots, ideally shaded by other plants. Its rambling habit adds to the romance of Lowther's ruins, enhancing the dreamy atmosphere of rebirth. AGM*.

Height and spread 12m x 4m.
Origin Throughout mountainous areas of Asia, from Afghanistan to Taiwan.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, organically rich soils; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b†.
Season of interest May to June.

June plants

Delicate woodlanders, a vigorous climber and the gloriously scented blossom of a stately tree are among the early summer highlights for head gardener **Andrea Brunsendorf**

PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MAYBURY

Andrea Brunsendorf is head gardener at Lowther Castle & Gardens in Cumbria **lowthercastle.org**

AQUILEGIA VULGARIS

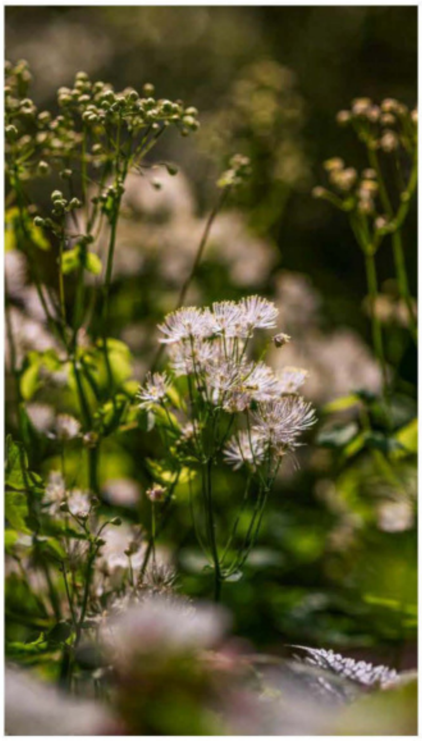
I remember picking this species in the wild as a child, when I would always favour the bluish-mauve, nodding, bonnet-like flowers over the dusky pink ones. However, it's a short-lived perennial that also has a long history in cultivation. I love to plant it with mid-season tulips, so the colour-saturated tulips can emerge through its fresh and delicate spring foliage. Easy to grow from seed and once established in optimum conditions, it will self-seed almost too freely, as it does in Lowther's Rock Garden, which is currently being reimagined with a Dan Pearson planting design.

Height and spread 70cm x 30cm.
Origin Europe, including Britain.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, moderately rich soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Late April to early July.

MAGNOLIA WILSONII

A deciduous woody plant and a real botanical treat that flowers in early summer, avoiding those sneaky late frosts. Its pendent, saucer-shaped, white flowers and crimson stamens remind me of lofty meringues with a raspberry in the centre. Discovered in China by the eminent plant hunter Ernest Wilson, it has mesmerised gardeners for more than a century with its almost ethereal and divine floral effect. Best in a sheltered position so that once it has reached its full height you can walk under this small tree and look up into those beautiful flowers. AGM.

Height and spread 8m x 8m.
Origin South-central China.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, organically rich soils, preferably slightly acidic; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest Mid-May through June.



THALICTRUM AQUILEGIIFOLIUM 'ALBUM'

This charming perennial seems to appear overnight in spring with its delicate, divided green basal foliage. These aquilegia-like leaflets carry on up the slender purplish stems, which are topped with fluffy clouds of pure-white flowers from early summer onwards, bridging the June gap. This species is one of the early flowering meadow rues. It will mostly grow true from seed if you have only the white-flowering form. Easy to grow, and trouble-free, it's a superb plant that even rabbits and deer will leave alone.

Height and spread 1m x 60cm.
Origin Europe to Asia.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, organically rich soil; full sun to part shade, prefers dappled light.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest June to July.

---

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

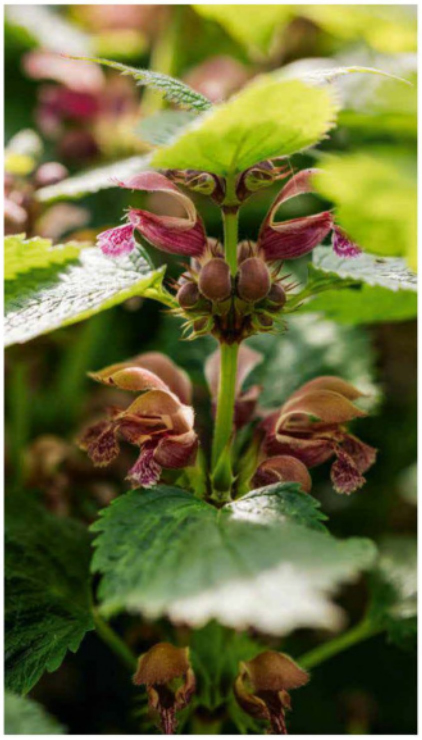
With whorls of pink-lipped, velvety flowers and a neatly poised habit, *Lamium orvala* creates a real presence in a partially shaded border

LUZULA SYLVATICA ‘MARGINATA’

One of the most versatile woodrushes. Performs best in slightly acidic, moisture-retentive soils in dappled light, but adopts to difficult growing conditions ranging from dry shade to poorly draining soils in full sun. Its dense tufts gradually spread on short runners to create an impenetrable continuous groundcover. The narrow leaves are evergreen with neat creamy-white margins, and its golden-brown flower panicles dance loosely above the foliage until midsummer. AGM.

Height and spread 45cm x 45cm.
Origin Europe, including Britain, through to the Western Caucasus.
Conditions Dry to moist, organically rich soil; full sun to shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Flowers late April to July; foliage year round.

SCAN HERE
Scan the QR code with your phone camera to watch our video, and discover why *Luzula sylvatica* ‘Marginata’ is Andrea’s plant of the month.



LAMIUM ORVALA

With its large, heart-shaped, green leaves, this handsome foliage plant resembles a wild nettle without the sting. The balm-leaved deadnettle is an extremely ornamental and long-lived perennial with whorls of pink-lipped, velvety flowers and a neatly poised habit. It creates a real presence in a partially shaded border from late spring through late summer. It contrasts well with fine-textured shade plants such as ferns, forest grasses and various spring bulbs. I first saw it beautifully sited in Piet Oudolf’s garden, Hummelo, and knew I would grow this non-invasive woodlander one day.

Height and spread 50cm x 50cm.
Origin Central Eastern Europe.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, organically rich soils; best in partial to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Late April to July.

TILIA X EUROPAEA

This vigorous lime makes up many grand avenues, including one here at Lowther dating back to the 17th century. These formerly pollarded trees possess so much character with their dense thickets of basal suckers and burrs. In winter, the slender twigs and leaf buds turn red, the latter resembling small boxing gloves. Taking in the sweet fragrance of the cream-coloured flower clusters, accompanied by the buzz of bees frantically feeding on them, is a special summer moment and reminds me to pick some for my evening infusion.

Height and spread 35m x 15m.
Origin Europe, including Britain (hybrid between *T. cordata* and *T. platyphyllos*).
Conditions Moist, well-drained, moderately rich soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.
Season of interest Flowers June to July; winter stems until first leaf bursts.

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Naomi's tips

- Try something new and be brave with colour! sometimes a variety or colour you wouldn't normally choose ends up being your new favourite.
- Use filters on our website to find flowering times, suitable planting conditions, or create a specific colour scheme.
- Choose varieties which flower in early, mid and late spring and you'll enjoy a long, successive display which lasts for the whole season.
- Order early, some varieties sell-out fast!

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You can achieve the most sensational spring display in your garden with top-quality bulbs, and now's the time to make a start. Spring-flowering bulbs need to be planted between September and mid-December. As demand is high for bulbs in the middle of planting season, it's best get in early and place your order so you have your bulbs ready for all those golden, autumn fair weather planting opportunities.

Planning your spring planting scheme, or simply selecting your favourite varieties, is an exciting activity for any plant lover. The range is inspiring and many just can't wait to get creative with colours and pre-order well ahead of the season. Bulb shopping is the perfect rainy-day autumn task.

Don't put it off for too long, because some of the most popular varieties sell out fast. Ordering early in the season means you benefit from a wider choice and don't miss out on your favourites.

Allow time for planting your bulbs, and discovering you may need more! It's a common gardeners' worry – "I don't think I have enough bulbs!". If you find you have some extra space to fill once you have your bulbs all set out, it's good to have the option to top up with more before the season ends and it's too late.

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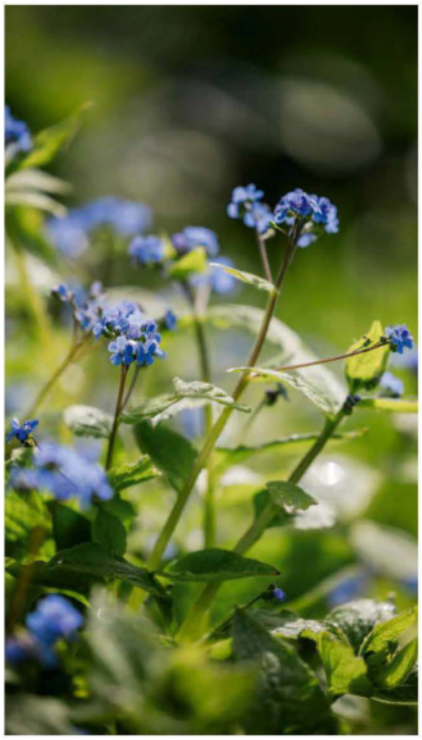
Brunnera is an essential groundcover, suppressing weeds with its large leaves that are unpalatable to rabbits. What's not to like?



BRUNNERA MACROPHYLLA 'LANGTREES'

Lovely long sprays of forget-me-not flowers emerge in spring and last until midsummer. The foliage, marked with metallic spots, forms attractive mounds that can persist throughout the season. If it catches too much sun, heat or drought, you can encourage new foliage with a summer chop provided it's kept moist, and a second bloom will follow in August. An essential groundcover here at Lowther, suppressing weeds with its large leaves that are unpalatable to rabbits. What's not to like?

Height and spread 50cm x 50cm.
Origin Garden (species Western Asian, in the Caucasus and northeastern Turkey).
Conditions Moist, well-drained, organically rich soils; part to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.
Season of interest April to June.

ONOCLEA SENSIBILIS

This deciduous fern emerges in late spring, with apple-green fronds that mellow to pale green. Its rhizomatous rootstock continues to produce new arching leathery fronds throughout the season. Woodier and fertile fronds, covered in bead-like spores, appear in late summer, providing attractive winter interest when foliage gets cut down by the first autumn frost. Known for its sensitivity to frosts and drought, hence its common name of sensitive fern, it can cope with poorly drained sites and, in favourable conditions, can become a thug if not checked. AGM.

Height and spread 60cm x 1.5m.
Origin Eastern North America.
Conditions Moisture-retentive, organically rich soils; part to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Late April to first frost.

PAPAVER CAMBRICUM

The Welsh poppy is native to the British Isles moist rocky banks, stream sides and waste grounds. It is an undemanding, tap-rooted perennial that some might think of as unruly in the garden because, when happy, it self-seeds prolifically. I love it, especially the first flush of delicate cup-shaped yellow flowers in late spring and the fact that it can hold its own company until early autumn. A real charmer that looks great among ferns and along wild woodland paths, where it glows in the dappled light.

Height and spread 50cm x 30cm.
Origin Coast of western Europe and Britain.
Conditions Moist, well-drained, moderately rich soils; full sun to shade. It is best in dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.
Season of interest June to September.

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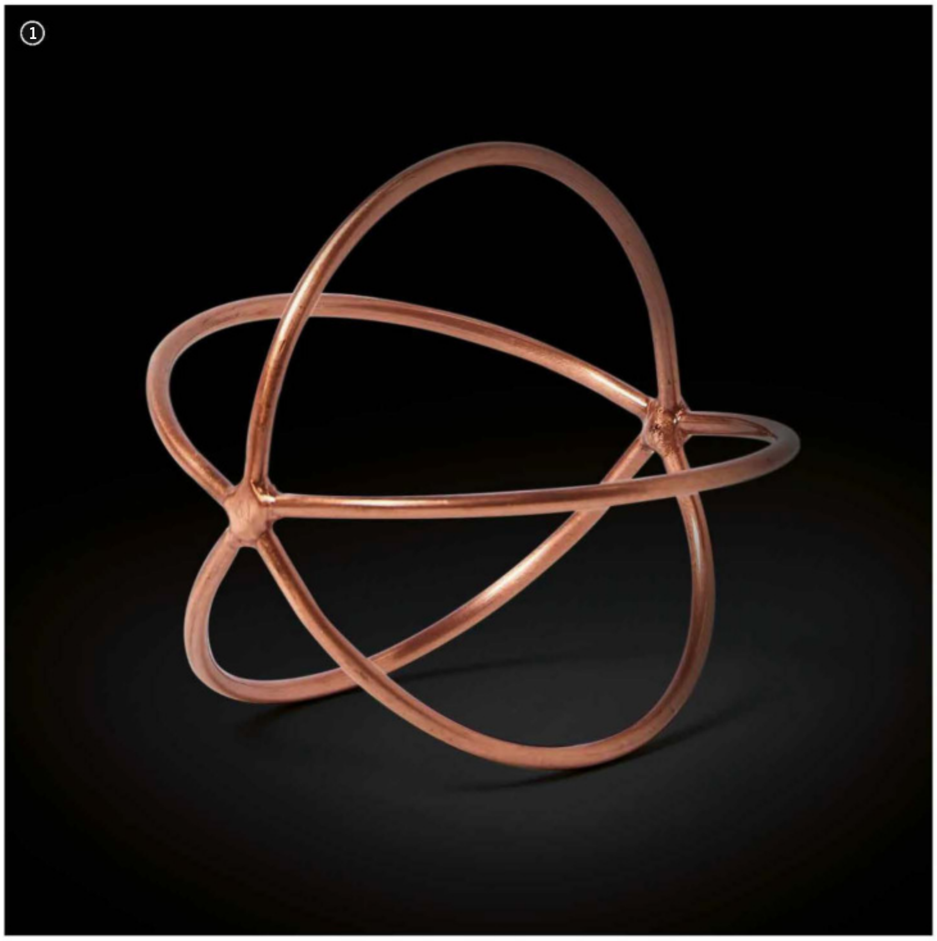
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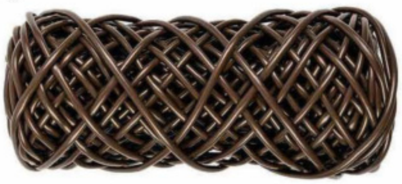
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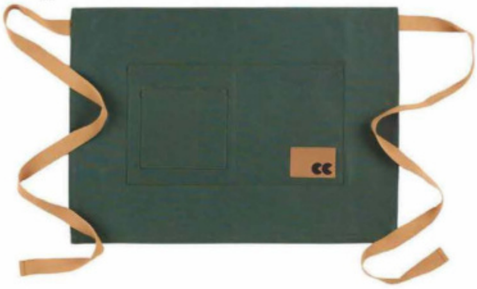
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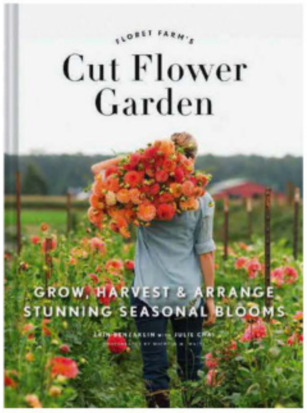
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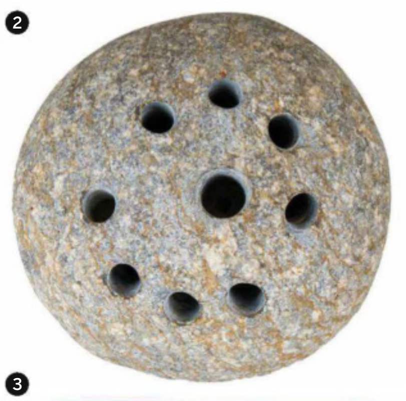

1. Hopewood Zarzo Flower Basket, £79, toa.st **2. Kikkerland Frog Stone,** £7, ohhbygum.ie **3. Tourbon Leather Garden Tool Belt,** dark brown, £27.99, amazon.co.uk **4. DAKSJUS Gardening Gloves,** £2.50, ikea.com **5. Cut Flower Food and Snips Set,** £14, grantandbudds.com **6. Sweet Pea Wigwam Obelisk,** rust, 90cm £59.99, 1.2m £69.99, 1.52m £79.99, 01344 578000, crocus.co.uk **7. Mid Handled Tools,** (from left) cultivator, trowel, weeding fork, transplanting trowel, dandelion weeder, onion hoe, £19.99 each, 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com **8. Herbaceous Supports with Grid,** 12mm steel, tall L2 with grid, Ø 60cm x H 90cm, £195, muntons.net

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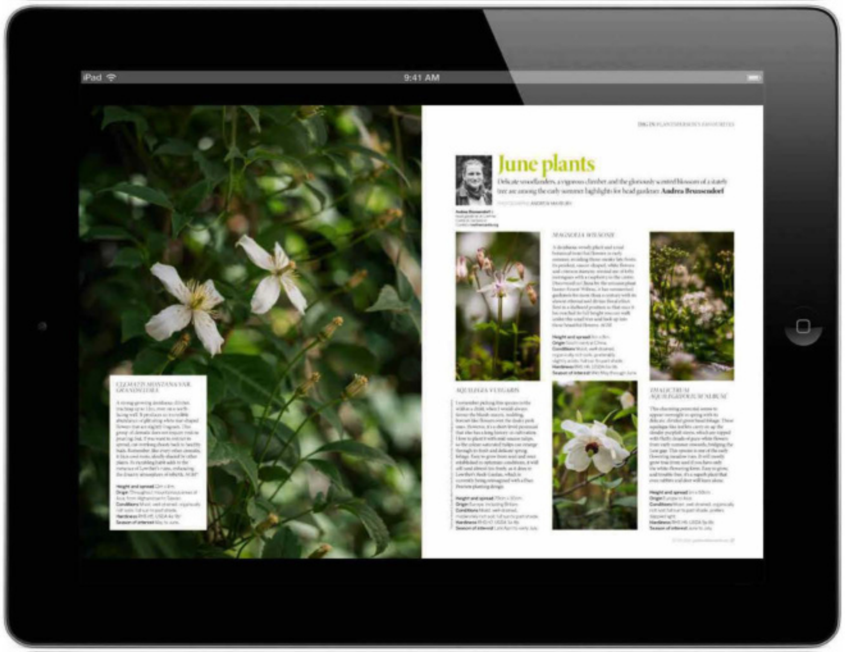
Summertime at
Sissinghurst


June plants

SUMMER-
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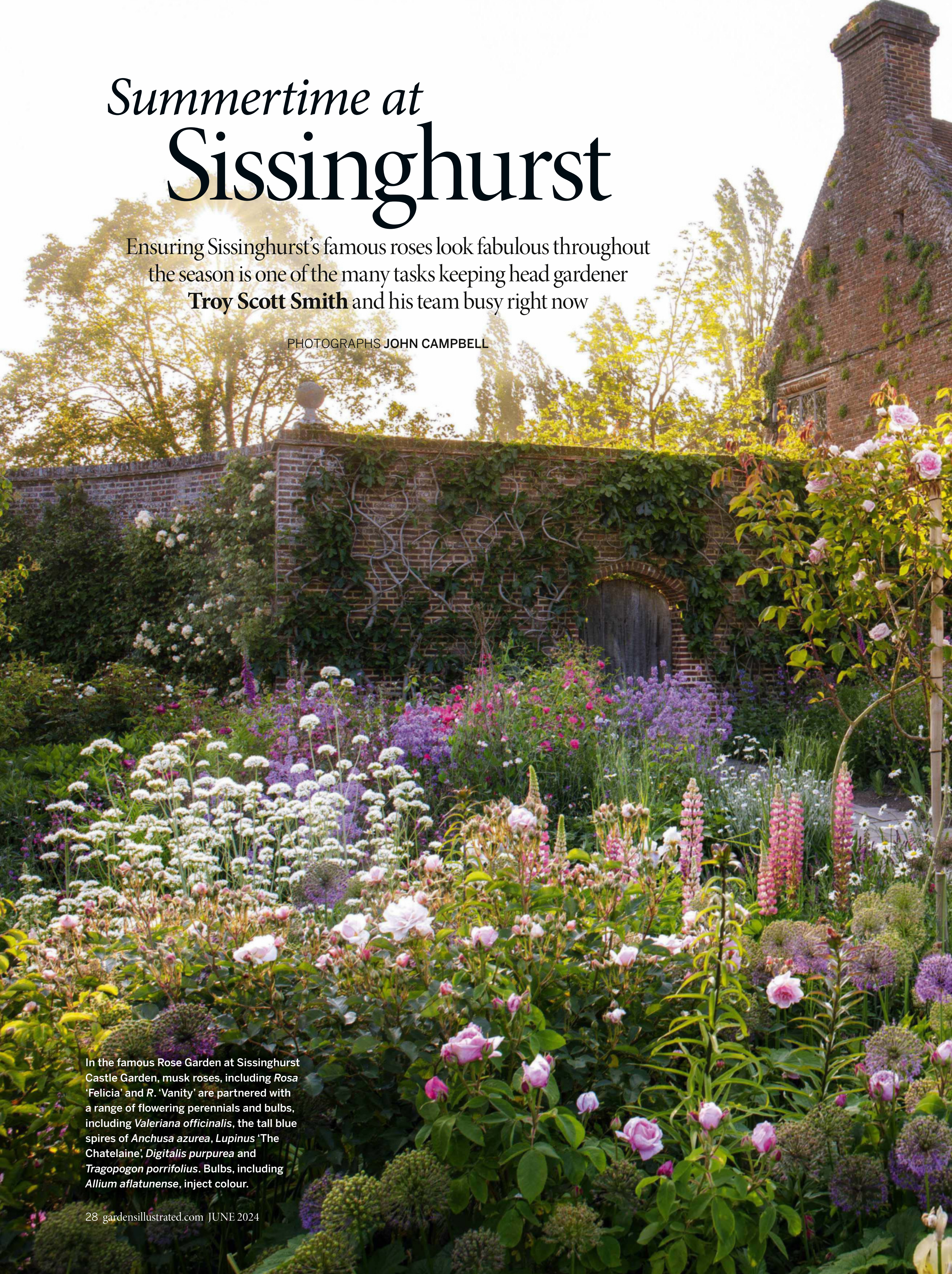
Summertime at Sissinghurst

Ensuring Sissinghurst's famous roses look fabulous throughout the season is one of the many tasks keeping head gardener **Troy Scott Smith** and his team busy right now

PHOTOGRAPHS **JOHN CAMPBELL**



In the famous Rose Garden at Sissinghurst Castle Garden, musk roses, including *Rosa* 'Felicia' and *R.* 'Vanity' are partnered with a range of flowering perennials and bulbs, including *Valeriana officinalis*, the tall blue spires of *Anchusa azurea*, *Lupinus* 'The Chatelaine', *Digitalis purpurea* and *Tragopogon porrifolius*. Bulbs, including *Allium aflatunense*, inject colour.

> My team and I analyse the planting throughout the year in each of the ten Sissinghurst 'rooms', making comments on what's looking good

The vernal equinox may be the signal for the garden to wake up, but the slow burn of April and May is only fully ignited with the blaze of June. Soaring spikes of lupins begin to show colour, peony buds rupture revealing their crinkled petals, cow parsley froths in broad waist-high swathes and poppies dance in excited fecundity. For three weeks in June, the air within the crumbling walls of Sissinghurst hangs heavy with the intoxicating scent of roses.

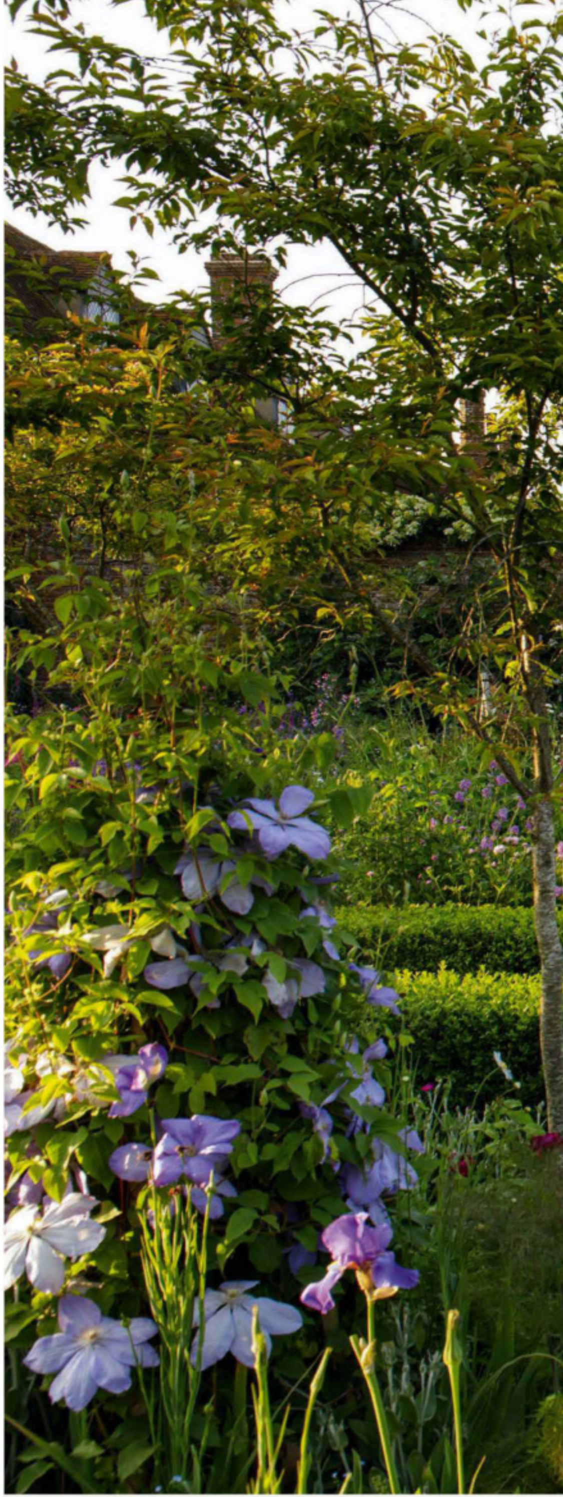
Of all Sissinghurst's flowers, it was the rose that most captured Vita Sackville-West's imagination. 'They have a generosity which is as desirable in plants as in people,' she wrote. They're central to the Sissinghurst style of planting and typical of its soft abundance.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is nothing grand at Sissinghurst; instead a relaxed atmosphere hugs the garden like a familiar overcoat. The garden is subtle yet striking, muscular yet free-flowing, spontaneous yet tight. The garden exhibits an unerring sense of proportion and detail but takes nothing away from its surroundings. The planting is uncluttered by an awareness of fashion or competition and rarities sit cheek by jowl with native wildlings.

These are the touchstones we work to, the frame within which I manage the garden today. People speculate that I must be constrained in what I would like to do here or that the idea of 'ancestor worship' gardening is taken too far at Sissinghurst. I don't agree – I find the embedded history of the site and the gardening philosophies of Vita and Harold a tool for creativity and ingenuity. My team and I are not method acting; our gardening is not about creating a pastiche or ossified facsimile of Vita and Harold's garden. Change and renewal are vital ingredients of a thriving, dynamic garden, it is the nature of change that matters, not change in itself.

Vita's planting style at Sissinghurst was instinctive and influenced by the plants she saw on her travels. These plants made an abiding impression and would constantly recur in her gardens and in her writing. Slabs of blue gentians in the Orchard, broad rugs of bearded iris in the Rose Garden, tall shuffling spires of eremurus in the White Garden, and in the Lower Courtyard, overhung by an enormous magnolia, one of the most imposing of June-flowering plants: *Cardiocrinum giganteum*. Emerging from ▷

To continue turn to page 34



Main image

The walled Rose Garden, in what was originally Vita and Harold's vegetable garden, is filled with not just roses but layers of perennial planting. Its north-south path is studded along its length with a mix of roses, including *R*. 'Baron Girod de l'Ain', *R*. 'James Mitchell' and *R*. 'Gloire de France', along with exotics and stalwarts, such as *Geranium pratense* 'Mrs Kendall Clark' and *Clematis* 'Mrs Cholmondeley'.

Bottom row, from left

Both Harold and Vita loved bearded irises and used them extensively in the garden at Sissinghurst, particularly in the Rose Garden where they billow and eddy among the skirts of the old roses. Here, an American hybrid from the 1940s, *Iris* 'Three Oaks' is held in good company with the useful *Verbascum phoeniceum*.

Iris 'Black Taffeta' threaded through with campanula and the biennial sweet rocket, *Hesperis matronalis,* behind.

Another US hybrid from the 1940s, and one of Troy's all-time favourites, is *Iris* 'Shannopin'. Its exuberance is tempered by gently embedding it among simple natives, such as blue cornflower, ox-eye daisies and foxgloves.

SUMMER TASKS AT SISSINGHURST

Adding hardy annuals

Each week from February to midsummer we add plants to enrich and enliven schemes. Some, particularly perennials and shrubs, are planned, but others, such as the annuals, are more instinctive. Hardy annuals can be sown directly in their flowering site and then left to self-seed in subsequent years. Alternatively, for more control, we sow some hardy annuals in a pan under glass in September to October and again in February to March.

For each of the ten Sissinghurst 'rooms' we have a palette of annuals I'm happy to let run, simply weeding out the 'enthusiasm' of some, such as campions or poppies. Alongside firm favourites I like to try a few 'new to me'. This year I'm growing the Chinese forget-me-not, *Cynoglossum amabile* 'Firmament'. I am hopeful its indigo-blue flowers on light-limbed chocolate-coloured stems will be a delight threaded through bearded irises.

Tying in clematis

When growing clematis against a wall, the best method of support is pig mesh, the sort of wire that has 15cm squares, secured to the wall. Even with the right support, however, it is still vital at the start of the season to guide the new shoots in the direction that you want, using 'twizzlers' (paper-covered wire). Without this early intervention they will wrap themselves into a knot. One of my favourites is *Clematis tangutica*. A vigorous but never rampant clematis, it clambers over everything, hanging its yellow flowers like tiny Chinese lanterns. These flowers mingle with the silky silvery seedheads that Vita delightfully described as 'reminding her of Yorkshire terriers curled up into a ball.'

Deadheading roses

Deadheading is a weekly task during the flowering period. In the photo, right, I tackle striped *Rosa* 'Honorine De Brabant' with yellow *R.* 'Claire Jacquier' behind and surrounded by *R.* 'William Lobb', the rare *R.* 'Magenta' and an unknown pale-pink rose. We are lucky to have small teams of local volunteers who come in specifically to deadhead our roses. For every perfect bloom, there will be another two or three that have finished and will be unsightly unless removed.

Sowing biennials

We grow most of our biennials in a large open bed west of the Rose Garden. We sow under glass from the end of May into June, depending on the year. However, there are subtle timing differences that matter – the first you should sow are sweet Williams, followed by foxgloves, verbascum, wallflowers and pansies last of all, perhaps as late as July. When they're large enough to handle, we prick out the seedlings into plug trays before lining them out in the biennial bed for summer. By the time we're ready to plant in the garden, usually late October, the majority have made good strong plants and will flower from April through to June the following year.

Pruning early flowering shrubs

Pruning in any garden is essential, but especially in more compact gardens. Sissinghurst is a series of small garden 'rooms', so I find the sense of order, definition and scale that pruning injects invaluable. I'm careful, however, to ensure that our pruning still allows the plant to grow beyond horticultural perfection. For me, the character of Sissinghurst is conveyed as much, if not more so, through the management of the plants, rather than the choice and distribution of them. So only prune what is necessary and be sympathetic and sensitive to the plant's underlying character and form.

Cutting down early flowering perennials

By August the garden can look prematurely 'over', with the brown foliage of early flowering perennials exerting a negative influence. To avoid this, we cut any perennials that flower before midsummer's day down to the ground as soon as they have finished flowering. Given sufficient moisture, new growth and some new flowers will soon reappear. A word of caution, however: by cutting some of these early doers down – for example, *Iris sibirica* – you are removing growth that might develop into attractive and sculptural seedheads that will both give interest to the winter garden, and provide a valuable food source for birds.

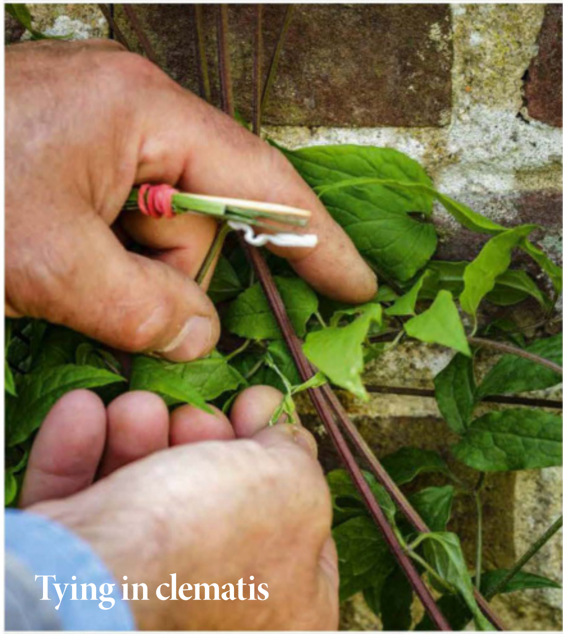
Lifting and dividing bearded iris

In 1949, Vita wrote of irises: 'No velvet can rival the richness of their falls; or, let us say, it is to velvet only that we may compare them.' Depending on the heaviness of your soil, flowering can become shy and so every three years or so we try to lift, divide and replant the entire group. Irises make their major root growth between July and September, so the best time to lift is immediately after flowering. Break away and discard all but the fattest rhizomes and cut the foliage to a low arrow-shaped fan. These should be re-planted in prepared soil at about 30cm spacing.

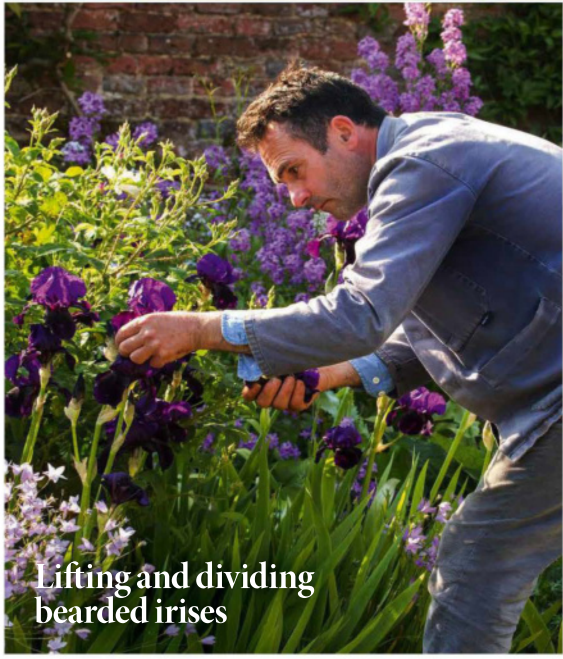
SCAN HERE

Watch our video showing Troy lifting and dividing bearded irises, by scanning the QR code with your phone camera or go to **gardensillustrated.com/ bearded-iris**

Adding hardy annuals



Tying in clematis



Lifting and dividing bearded irises

Deadheading is a weekly task during the flowering period. For every perfect bloom, there will be two or three that will be unsightly unless removed

Deadheading roses

> Although not unique, Vita's White Garden was rare at the time, and became one of the most celebrated and influential gardens of the 20th century

▷ glossy green leaves somewhat reminiscent of a hosta or veratrum, a stout stem rises up to three or more metres, from the top of which hang many long, narrow, trumpet-shaped, scented flowers of greenish white, maroon-red in the throat.

It was Vita's use of colour that set her above her contemporaries. Her style was based on flower colour and relies on orchestrating subtle combinations and contrasts within an often narrow tonal band. In the Sunset Garden you can feel your pulse racing as the planting throbs in a tidal wave of deeply saturated colour. Reds, oranges and bright yellows collide with incredible intensity. The amazing vermillion-coloured flowers of *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer' in tandem with *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff' drip their glowing petals to the floor, like molten lava.

However, it is to the White Garden we turn to witness Vita's most symphonic and memorable use of colour; an essay in the use of flowers and foliage within the limited palette of grey, green and white. Repeated mounds of lavender bubble like boiling water in a pan and the annual *Ammi majus* hangs over the garden like sheets of faded muslin. In June, it is *Crambe cordifolia* with its cage of white flowers that soar overhead, frothing like a billowing cumulus cloud, that steals the show.

Although not unique, it was rare at the time, and became one of the most celebrated and influential gardens of the 20th century. Describing the garden, Vita wrote: 'The white-and-grey garden begins to look well in June, when the little avenue of Almond trees down the centre is draped with the lacy white festoons of *Rosa filipes* and the genuine old 'Garland' Rose, and when generous plantings of *Lilium regale* come up through the grey *Artemisia* and silvery *Cineraria maritima*.'

Although it is only June, my attention will soon shift to next year. Together my team and I analyse the planting throughout the year in each of the ten Sissinghurst 'rooms', making comments on what's looking good, what to add, what should be changed, tweaked or removed completely. It is only with these notes that we can plan for autumn changes and improvements for the following year. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Join us for our special reader event, Sissinghurst at sunset, on Sunday 16 June (see page 39), for an evening tour with Troy Scott Smith at prime rose-blooming time.

Turn the page to see more of the early summer garden ▷

Main image

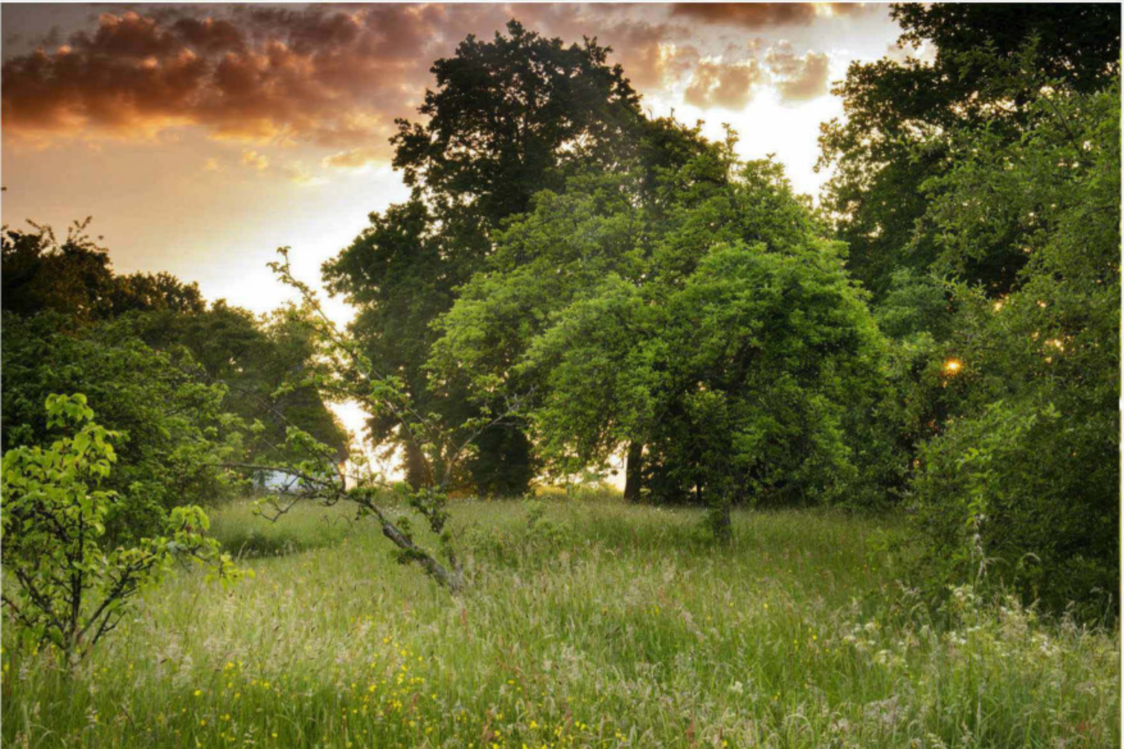
Made in the early 1950s, the White Garden represents the plantsmanship of Vita at its most highly developed. In early summer the creamy-white, fragrant flowers of *Rosa* 'Madame Legras de Saint Germain' sit cheek by jowl with *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Duchesse de Nemours'. The grey foliage of *Stachys byzantina* offers a change of tone and the curious flowers of the annual white bladder campion, *Silene vulgaris*, bring a feeling of the wild.

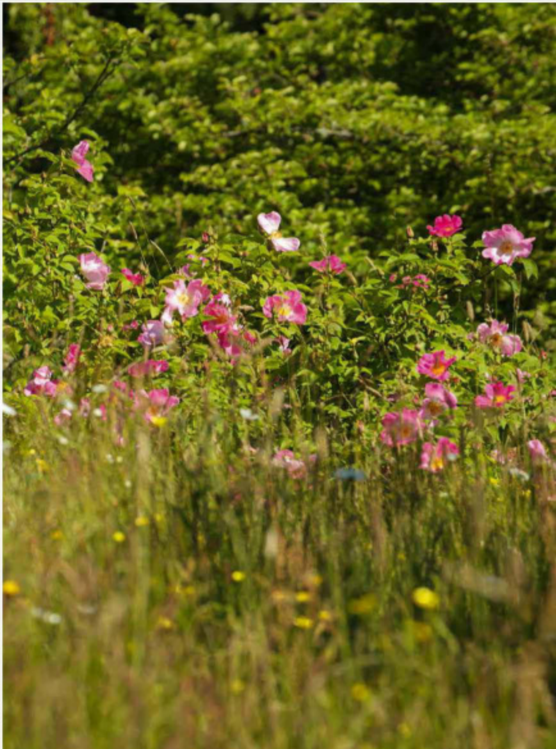
Bottom row, from left

Form is everything when working in single colours, particularly white. Here *Orlaya grandiflora* swirls around *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus' with a single white foxglove adding a powerful vertical energy.

The pared-back feeling of the Orchard is the perfect antidote for the high-octane floriferousness happening elsewhere at Sissinghurst. In summer, myriad spring bulbs give way to meadow grass and wildflowers.

In the long grass of the Orchard, a touch of romance is imparted by wild-looking roses, such as *Rosa roxburghii*, the chestnut rose, which has large single pale-pink flowers, followed by spiny yellow-green hips.





Early summer focus: Delos

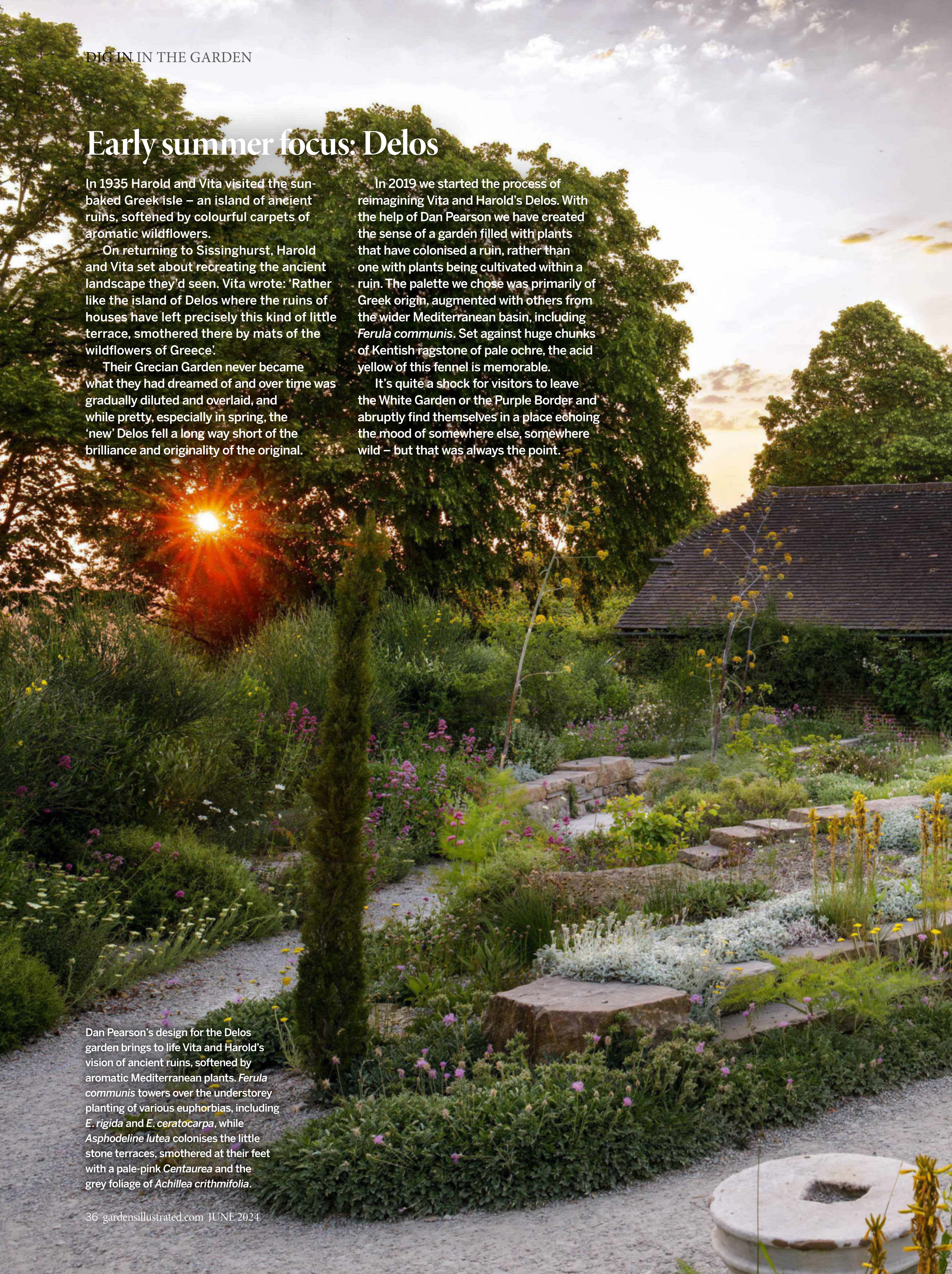
In 1935 Harold and Vita visited the sun-baked Greek isle – an island of ancient ruins, softened by colourful carpets of aromatic wildflowers.

On returning to Sissinghurst, Harold and Vita set about recreating the ancient landscape they'd seen. Vita wrote: 'Rather like the island of Delos where the ruins of houses have left precisely this kind of little terrace, smothered there by mats of the wildflowers of Greece'.

Their Grecian Garden never became what they had dreamed of and over time was gradually diluted and overlaid, and while pretty, especially in spring, the 'new' Delos fell a long way short of the brilliance and originality of the original.

In 2019 we started the process of reimagining Vita and Harold's Delos. With the help of Dan Pearson we have created the sense of a garden filled with plants that have colonised a ruin, rather than one with plants being cultivated within a ruin. The palette we chose was primarily of Greek origin, augmented with others from the wider Mediterranean basin, including *Ferula communis*. Set against huge chunks of Kentish ragstone of pale ochre, the acid yellow of this fennel is memorable.

It's quite a shock for visitors to leave the White Garden or the Purple Border and abruptly find themselves in a place echoing the mood of somewhere else, somewhere wild – but that was always the point.



Dan Pearson's design for the Delos garden brings to life Vita and Harold's vision of ancient ruins, softened by aromatic Mediterranean plants. *Ferula communis* towers over the understorey planting of various euphorbias, including *E. rigida* and *E. ceratocarpa*, while *Asphodeline lutea* colonises the little stone terraces, smothered at their feet with a pale-pink *Centaurea* and the grey foliage of *Achillea crithmifolia*.

It's a shock for visitors to leave the White Garden and abruptly find themselves in a place echoing the mood of somewhere wild

This was Sylvia's promise to you...

A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And for so many survivors the road to recovery is still long and desperately lonely. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

But it doesn't have to be like this. You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

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Stroke
Association

GI Reader EVENT

The Rose Garden.

The Tower seen from the Orchard.

Sissinghurst at sunset with Troy Scott Smith

Join our exclusive reader evening at the ultimate romantic garden. Enjoy a guided tour with head gardener Troy and wander the grounds at your leisure after visitors have left

As well as experiencing the famous **White Garden** and **Rose Garden** at their peak flowering time, our guests will have the chance to see the new **Delos** garden created with designer Dan Pearson, the Cottage Garden and Orchard all to themselves when the garden has closed for the day and regular visitors have gone.

The event will begin in the afternoon with a talk from head gardener Troy, with insights into the garden's creation by **Vita Sackville-West** and Harold Nicolson, and its ongoing development, as well as its quintessentially English-style planting. The walking tour will follow, culminating in a pre-dinner drink and Q&A session. After a tasty buffet-style supper, guests are free to explore the gardens again at their own pace.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

Gardens Illustrated reserves the right to change any element of any event due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control. See full terms and conditions, available at **gardensillustrated.com/sissinghurst-event**

SUNDAY 16 JUNE 2024

EVENT DETAILS

Tickets: £185 per person, including supper and refreshments

Programme

3pm Arrival; coffee and tea
3.30pm Welcome and lecture with Troy Scott Smith
4.30pm Tour of the garden with Troy
6pm Pre-dinner drink in the garden and Q&A
6.30pm Supper
7.30pm Time to explore
8.30pm Depart

HOW TO BOOK

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HEAVEN SCENT

As summer adds a new dimension to his garden, **Nigel Slater** reflects on the rewards of planting for perfume

ILLUSTRATION **PAUL WEARING** PORTRAIT **JENNY ZARINS**

June, and the garden is at its most sensuous, inviting – no, imploring me – to look, touch and sniff. It is a wonderful month for smelling the garden. I do this first thing in the morning and again in the evening when everything is at its olfactory best.

Perfume was one of the first considerations when I started this little garden. The lavender bushes, I planted along the path to run my fingers through as I walked past, didn't last long in my London clay, but the high hedges planted to trap the scent of wallflowers and the vanilla notes of sweet box (*Sarcococca hookeriana*) have worked as I had hoped. Wallflowers are the smell of my childhood; as sweet as the tin of Parma Violets my grandmother kept in her handbag, perfuming her lace handkerchief and purse. Their scent is an essential part of this space.

The perfume that plants so generously give to this garden starts in March, when I catch the first fleeting scent of *Viburnum* x *bodnantense*. I know her and her sugar-pink pompoms simply as 'Dawn'. The soft, clove notes always take me by surprise, a reminder that even though the stems are bare, spring will soon be here. It is as if the garden is whispering: "Don't worry, it won't be long."

From late spring onwards, the garden's redolence comes rolling at us on every breeze, one cloud after another. Some plants are obvious givers of perfume – it is, indeed, expected of them. The roses, of course, but also the honeysuckle that clambers through the *Robinia* here, and the tiny old-fashioned pinks such as *Dianthus* 'Brympton Red' and *D.* 'Dad's Favourite'.

Sometimes, you are taken by surprise. The tripods of mauve and deep-purple sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus* 'Cedric Morris') growing outside the Garden Museum in London last summer hit me before I even spotted them, announcing their presence from the pavement.

I have yet to find a rose whose scent I didn't like. Yes, a few have disappointed (I always wish my favourite, *Rosa* x *odorata* ▷

> Mock orange blossom will be forever linked to the cool, white ointment with which my mother dealt with every scratch and graze

▷ 'Mutabilis', were more fragrant). The peach fragrance of *R.* 'Souvenir de Madame Léonie Viennot', which climbs the rear wall of the house, is a treat on a May evening, her rose and copper blooms hanging down like plump pink meringues. My *R.* 'Souvenir du Docteur Jamain' now flowers so high I would need a cherry picker to sniff its red, velvet blooms. Even so, it is rare to stick my nose among any rose's stamens and not want to go back a second time.

The term 'old rose fragrance' confuses me because it refers not only to the smell of ancient varieties but also modern roses that have been crossed with older ones. The fragrance of those such as the pair of *R.* Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord') in pots outside the kitchen door is probably what I imagine when I pull any rose gently towards me. The long-established *R.* Lady Emma Hamilton (= 'Ausbrother') has an unmistakable note of warm apricots to my nose, yet will no doubt bring different associations to others. I long to try once more with *R.* 'Gloire de Dijon', its apricot petals fading to the colour of an old tea stain; its perfume not dissimilar to your great aunt's favourite lapsang souchong.

It is good that my jasmines (*Jasminum officinale* and the pale-pink *J.* x *stephanense*) flower rather late, as it is only in midsummer that I have the study windows open all evening, and the smell of Chinese tea wafts up from the two plants climbing up the kitchen wall. Its notes come as a tease at first,then slowly, softly engulf the room, until it is almost too much, and I close the window with a thud.

Some smells are more personal, and their mere mention might induce a few quizzical looks. The peppery scent of dahlia stalks as you pick them, and the powdery whiff of 'going over' phlox take me instantly back to the first day of autumn term at school. Mock orange blossom (*Philadelphus*) will be forever linked to the cool, white ointment with which my mother dealt with every scratch and graze.

I should probably admit to a particular penchant for plants whose fragrance requires us to get a bit touchy-feely; scented pelargoniums being a case in point. There is little hint of the peppermint, rose and lemon oils that lie in the leaves until you give them a tender rub between thumb and forefinger. Wafts of Turkish delight, orange zest and mothballs will be released with a little gentle frottage. The touching of some – *Pelargonium* 'Attar of Roses', say, or *P.* 'Prince of Orange' – becomes positively addictive. The peach-fuzz of their leaves is an invitation for us to touch.

Some scented moments are unforgettable. A friend and experienced gardener had invited me for a firepit lunch that went on well into the evening. As the darkness drew in, so did a particularly powerful scent. So strong was it, that it completely overwhelmed even the night-scented stocks, and the citronella candles we were burning to fend off the annoying gnats.

We toured the garden by torchlight, tiptoeing along the gravel paths to find the heavy, swoon-inducing perfume was down to one single flower: a large *Lilium regale* the size of a trumpet, alone on its stem, yet almost glowing with scent. On that balmy evening, the sky darkening, a sprinkling of stars above our heads, the perfume became so heavy, so intoxicating, we could barely breathe. □

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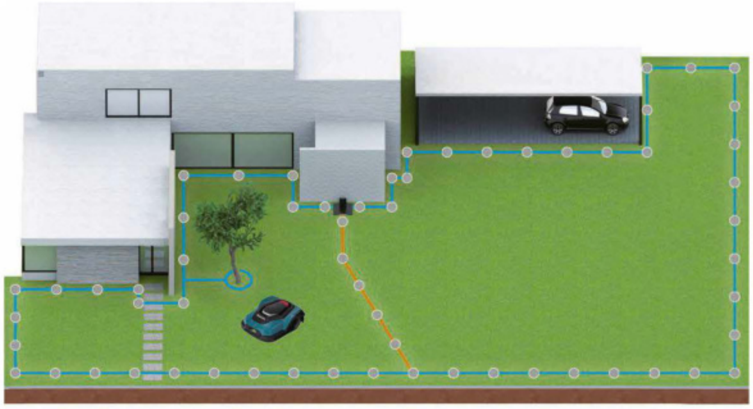

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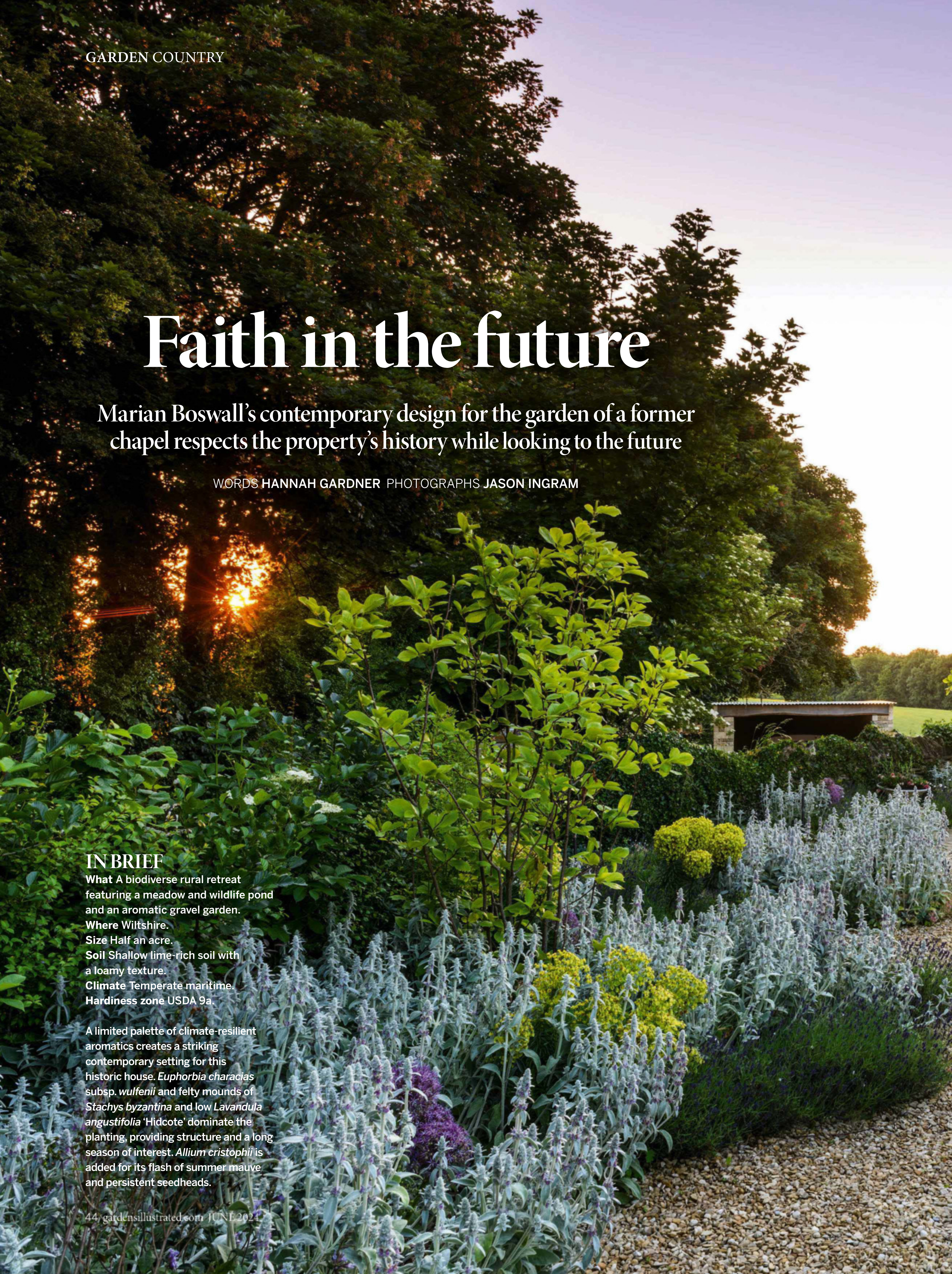


Faith in the future

Marian Boswall's contemporary design for the garden of a former chapel respects the property's history while looking to the future

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

IN BRIEF

What A biodiverse rural retreat featuring a meadow and wildlife pond and an aromatic gravel garden.
Where Wiltshire.
Size Half an acre.
Soil Shallow lime-rich soil with a loamy texture.
Climate Temperate maritime.
Hardiness zone USDA 9a.

A limited palette of climate-resilient aromatics creates a striking contemporary setting for this historic house. *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii* and felty mounds of *Stachys byzantina* and low *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote' dominate the planting, providing structure and a long season of interest. *Allium cristophii* is added for its flash of summer mauve and persistent seedheads.

To the rear of the chapel lies the graveyard, where headstones are now wreathed in wildflowers and peppered with species roses

Chapel House is an intriguing and unusual property with a rich ecclesiastical history. A Grade II-listed congregational chapel and manse, it's set in a secluded rural valley on the edge of the Cotswolds, close to an old Roman road, the Fosse Way. When interior designer Sheena Murphy, the founder of Studio Nune, bought the property, the chapel and manse, set just 1m apart, had already been meticulously restored and linked by a modern glass walkway, designed by Mark Wray Architects.

Specialist builders and craftspeople with keen attention to detail had set a high design bar, but there was work to do in the garden. The construction phase had taken its toll, and the re-worked living space had to regain its sense of place in the landscape while respecting its historic role as a chapel and graveyard.

Sheena and her husband had fond memories of the unmanicured wild landscapes in upstate New York and wanted their young daughter to grow up close to nature. So they turned to landscape architect Marian Boswall, who has a reputation for creating beautiful landscapes with long-term sustainability, to create a garden that would connect the house to its history and the surrounding landscape.

Marian is a designer who has ecology at the core of her creativity. At the start of a commission she takes time to discover not only how clients want to use their garden but how they want to feel in it; she teases out what really makes them happy, while also ensuring that the land is kept happy too. Part of her process involves the team taking their shoes off and sitting on the ground to "listen to what the land would like". On this site, she felt the clean lines of the slightly austere stone buildings were accentuated by its solitary position, surrounded by open fields. "It called out for gentle intervention and the creation of a garden that would be beautiful for what it does," she says. She sought to "balance the masculinity of the buildings with softer immersive planting".

The starting point was consulting ecologists to get to know the creatures that lived nearby. With the context of the local geology and biodiversity, a design solution could be developed that provided opportunities for enriching the local flora and fauna while fulfilling the needs of the family. The resulting garden skilfully incorporates a series of seating areas for different moments of the day, a brilliant tree house, adequate car parking and a majority share of wilder areas consisting of a wildflower-rich meadow spaciously planted with orchard trees and a wildlife pond – something for everyone.

The manse, which is covered by a climbing rose, is framed by a sculptural, aromatic gravel garden. The palette is textural and restrained, chiming with the sophisticated contemporary interior styling. Marian is keen to stress that the planting scheme is ▷

To continue turn to page 50

Headstones to the rear of the chapel sit within a floriferous perennial meadow. Marian wanted the area to be "full of roses and wildflowers to capture the romance of such a spiritual place". It is contained by a simple strip of regularly mown fine turf and a mature beech tree that hosts an amazing tree house.

5 eye-catching elements of Marian's design

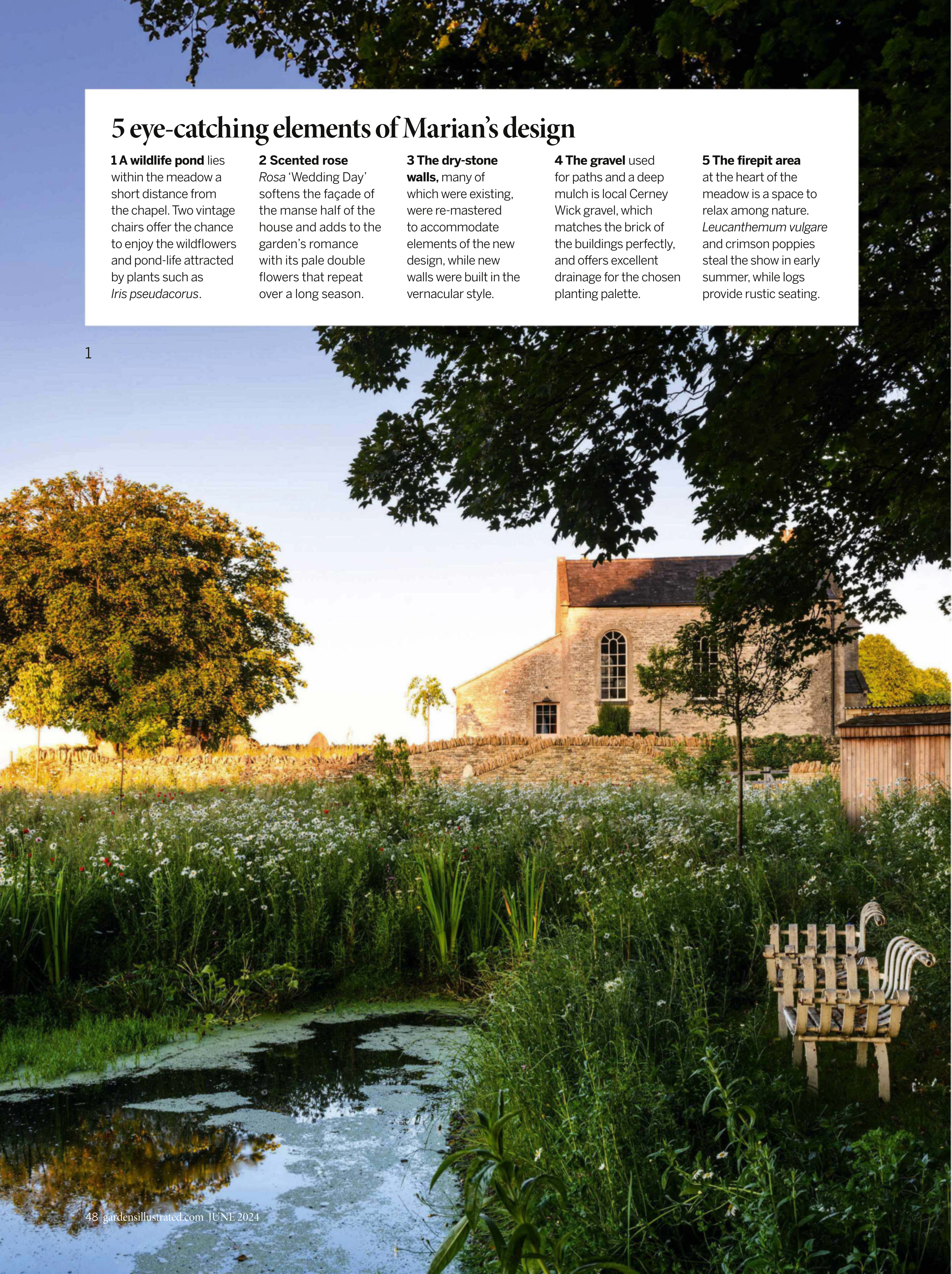
1 A wildlife pond lies within the meadow a short distance from the chapel. Two vintage chairs offer the chance to enjoy the wildflowers and pond-life attracted by plants such as *Iris pseudacorus*.

2 Scented rose *Rosa* 'Wedding Day' softens the façade of the manse half of the house and adds to the garden's romance with its pale double flowers that repeat over a long season.

3 The dry-stone walls, many of which were existing, were re-mastered to accommodate elements of the new design, while new walls were built in the vernacular style.

4 The gravel used for paths and a deep mulch is local Cerney Wick gravel, which matches the brick of the buildings perfectly, and offers excellent drainage for the chosen planting palette.

5 The firepit area at the heart of the meadow is a space to relax among nature. *Leucanthemum vulgare* and crimson poppies steal the show in early summer, while logs provide rustic seating.



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▷ climate resilient for both the very wet and drought conditions that appear to be the most predictable effects of climate change. A 20cm covering of Cerney Wick gravel placed directly onto the compacted soil forms the planting medium, a technique she attributes to Derry Watkins of Special Plants Nursery. Tough, aromatic plants such as *Stachys byzantina* and low *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote', are used to create the informal but structured planting, with bulbs such as *Allium sphaerocephalon* interspersed to attract pollinators, and provide both pops of colour and interesting seedheads later in the season.

To the rear of the chapel lies the graveyard, where headstones are now wreathed in wildflowers and peppered with species roses. To the side is the meadow, the volume and diversity of which distracts from a discreet car parking area. It is navigated by mown paths that lure you to the firepit and seating at its centre. The team used a meadow mat sown with 20 per cent grass mix and 80 per cent native wildflowers, which were specified "to give a good spread of nectar and pollen for the target species". These include common knapweed, a food source for the small skipper butterfly, and bird's foot trefoil, valuable to many butterflies including two species found locally: brown argus and common blue.

Warmly hued dry-stone walls wrap around large sections of the garden, providing privacy, habitat and shelter. These Cotswold stone walls, so characteristic of the area, bring cohesion and authenticity and were worked on by local stone masons Stonewood.

A little further on from the meadow is a generously sized wildlife pond. After a few logistical challenges, a rubber liner proved the most leak-proof and durable option within the given timeframe. Interestingly, as an experiment Marian planted aquatics and marginals direct into the stuffed hessian sacks that cover the liner edge – a method she has now added to her repertoire.

The build and planting was executed over a six-month period, falling in step with gaining listed building consent, undertaking a bat survey and working with the local conservation officer. In addition, the team was required to create an archaeological watching brief for the graveyard area, ceremoniously re-burying any stray bones found outside the graveyard, which was a first for them.

As well as respecting the history and ecology of a place, a central thread of Marian's design ethos is to think about the future. What impact will our interventions have? Where better to ponder the passing of time, and our own place in the cycle, than amid a sweep of meadow, with the scent of wild roses and honeysuckle drifting between the lichen-covered headstones of those in whose steps we gently tread. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Marian Boswall's work at **marianboswall.com**

Where better to ponder the passing of time and our own place in the cycle than amid a sweep of meadow, with the scent of wild roses?

The wildflower meadow is a nod to the flower-rich grasslands once common in the area. Restoring biodiversity and benefiting wildlife was key, and Marian used meadow mat turf that would quickly establish itself.

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MAGGIE TRAN

As the new head of gardens and growing on Tanera Mòr, a remote island in northwest Scotland, Maggie is on a mission to garden as sustainably as possible

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory My grandmother's council house garden was my first connection with growing. It was small but she had roses trained all over the walls, and every single patch of the heavy clay soil was jam-packed with Asian vegetables. I don't even know where she got the seeds from. On a hot summer's day when the strawberries ripened, we would eat them straight from the plants.

Life before gardening? I studied fine art, and worked as an artist specialising in performance art and experimental theatre, setting up social art spaces with my partner Graeme. I don't see gardening as a career change; more of a transition. I merely changed my medium.

First plant love *Myosotis*. I like to think it was *Myosotis* 'Royal Blue', as it is the most incredible sky blue.

Horticultural heroes? Aside from my grandmother, Isabella Vaughan, the former owner of Kerdalo in Brittany, was a big influence. Early in my career, she showed me that quality was about the whole process, and began with great nurseries. Also Siew Lee Vorley, who was assistant head gardener of Great Dixter when I was training there, and horticulturists Rachael Dodd and Robert Bradshaw.

Favourite garden Keith Wiley's Wildside. Contemporary gardens of scale are rarely created without the backing of heritage and wealth, so I've always been stunned with Keith's daring to have such vision and the sheer will to enact it.

Most valuable training De Hessenhof nursery in the Netherlands. I am interested in what it is to be sustainable and Hans and Miranda Kramer are an influential model.

Dream plant destination I would love to see steppe landscapes and alpine meadows in the Caucasus Mountains of Central Asia, and Crete for great Mediterranean flora.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners? The expectation, spurred by social media, that everything can happen instantaneously is spreading to gardening. Gardening is a slow art; the best gardens evolve over time.

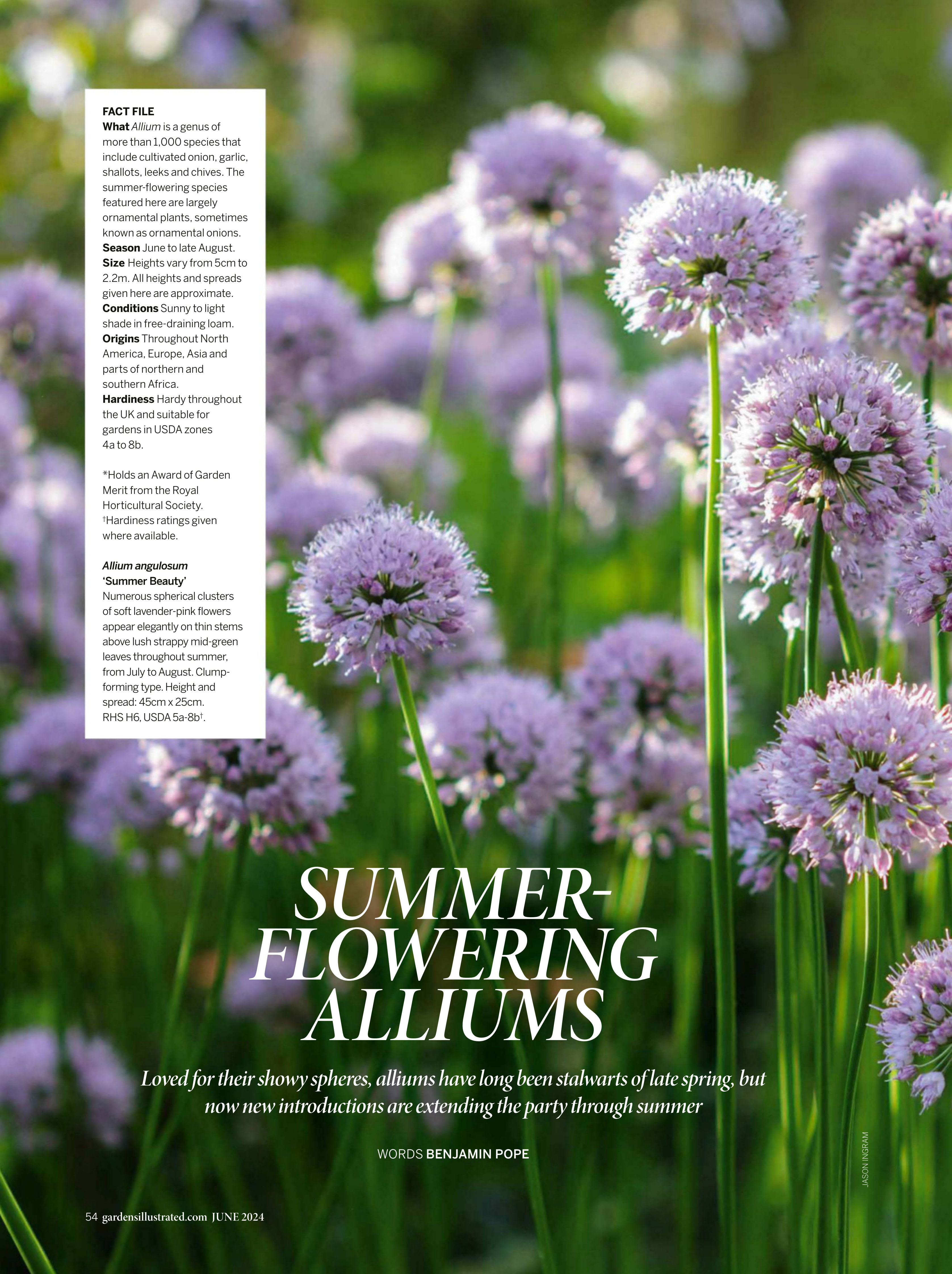
One easy way to be more sustainable Don't be too tidy and think of the insects and wildlife. You don't need to take up every leaf from the soil, you can cut back non-seeding material and put it at the back of borders. Whatever we can leave we do now as a natural mulch.

Guiding principle? Always question everything you do. Ask yourself why you don't like something and how you would do it differently. This is when you truly learn and innovation happens.

Where is horticulture heading? It's already taking cues from a wider range of practices, such as agroecology, and permaculture, and more people from different backgrounds are coming into horticulture who understand its value and want to do more than just maintain gardens.

Contact maggiesgrowontrees@gmail.com; @hortiventure

> The expectation that everything can happen instantaneously is spreading to gardening. Gardening is a slow art; the best gardens evolve



JASON INGRAM

SUMMER-FLOWERING ALLIUMS

Loved for their showy spheres, alliums have long been stalwarts of late spring, but now new introductions are extending the party through summer

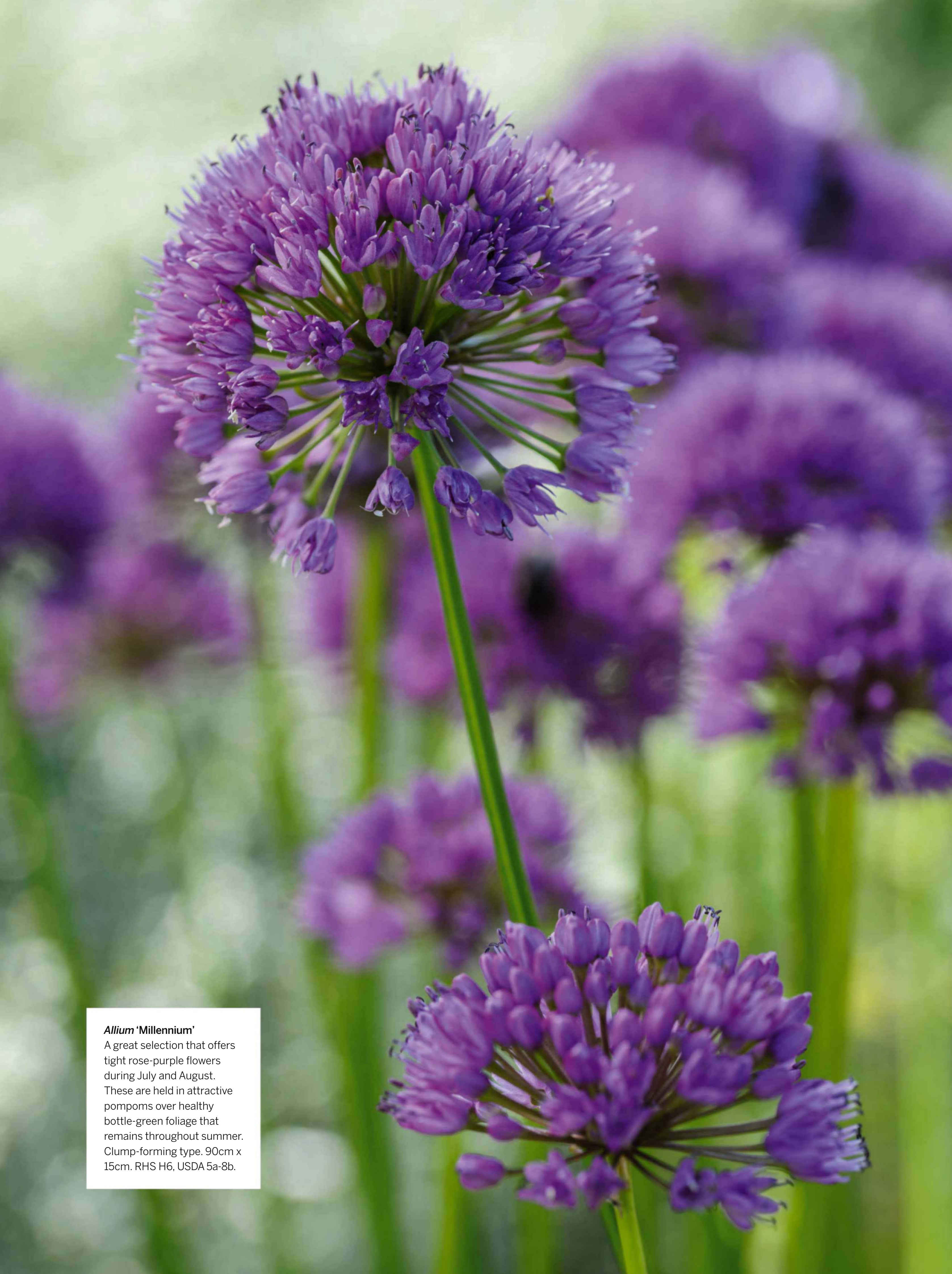
WORDS **BENJAMIN POPE**

FACT FILE

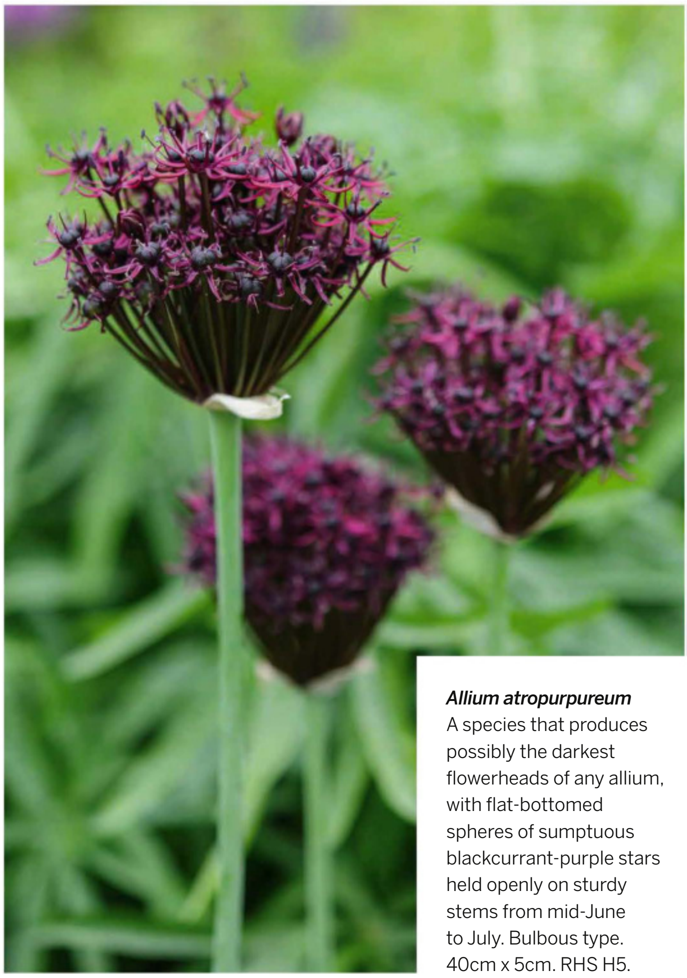
What *Allium* is a genus of more than 1,000 species that include cultivated onion, garlic, shallots, leeks and chives. The summer-flowering species featured here are largely ornamental plants, sometimes known as ornamental onions.
Season June to late August.
Size Heights vary from 5cm to 2.2m. All heights and spreads given here are approximate.
Conditions Sunny to light shade in free-draining loam.
Origins Throughout North America, Europe, Asia and parts of northern and southern Africa.
Hardiness Hardy throughout the UK and suitable for gardens in USDA zones 4a to 8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

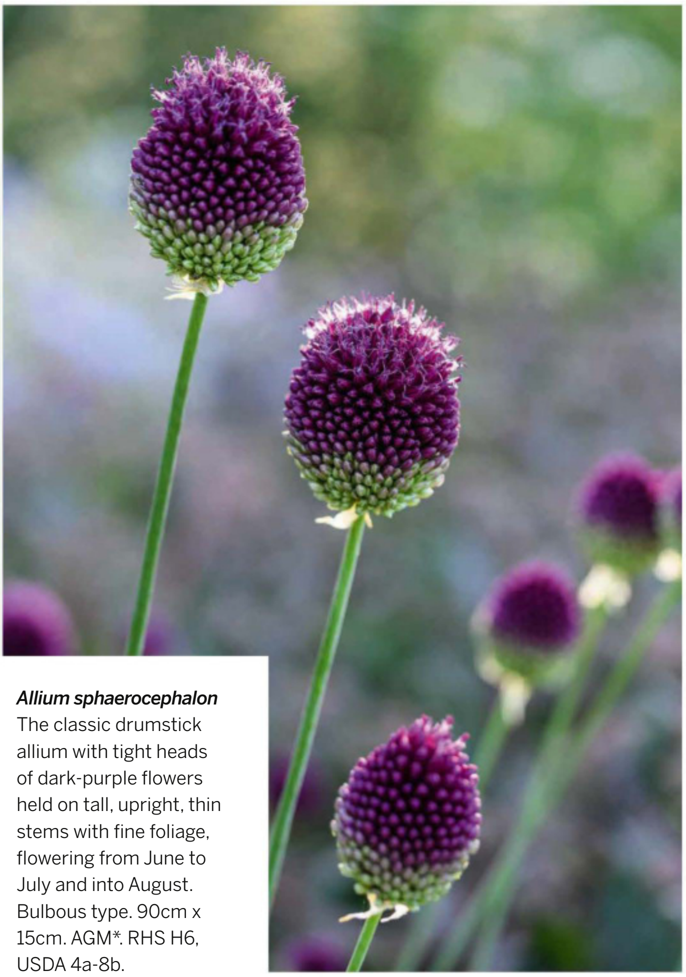
Allium angulosum
'Summer Beauty'
Numerous spherical clusters of soft lavender-pink flowers appear elegantly on thin stems above lush strappy mid-green leaves throughout summer, from July to August. Clump-forming type. Height and spread: 45cm x 25cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b†.



***Allium* 'Millennium'**
A great selection that offers tight rose-purple flowers during July and August. These are held in attractive pompoms over healthy bottle-green foliage that remains throughout summer. Clump-forming type. 90cm x 15cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.



Allium atropurpureum
A species that produces possibly the darkest flowerheads of any allium, with flat-bottomed spheres of sumptuous blackcurrant-purple stars held openly on sturdy stems from mid-June to July. Bulbous type. 40cm x 5cm. RHS H5.



Allium sphaerocephalon
The classic drumstick allium with tight heads of dark-purple flowers held on tall, upright, thin stems with fine foliage, flowering from June to July and into August. Bulbous type. 90cm x 15cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Valued for their firework displays that supersede the cacophony of tulips, alliums have rightly become a stalwart of the garden and a familiar addition to our borders in late spring. Not only are their flowers rich in nectar and attractive to bees and other pollinators, but the spherical inflorescences add colour and architectural form to borders when in flower, and their intricate dried seedheads persist through to autumn. Now, thanks to continued breeding and recent introductions, there are new cultivars of these attention-grabbing blooms that arrive a little later to the party, and we can enjoy alliums in our gardens all summer long.

Most alliums prefer a spot in full sun in reasonable, free-draining soil but some, including *Allium angulosum* and *A. nutans*, will take richer conditions and a little shade, while *A. ursinum* (wild garlic) thrives in deep woodland. All alliums generally fit into one of two groups: those that are bulbous and have a resting dormant period after flowering; and those that are clump forming, growing through spring and summer with persistent foliage. Traditionally, the most popular garden cultivars have been of bulbous species such as *A. cristophii*, *A. giganteum* and *A. schubertii*, that flower in late spring and early summer, with a few later contenders including *A. atropurpureum* and *A. sphaerocephalon*. In recent years there's been a shift in interest and availability for the later, often clump-forming cultivars that tend to behave more like herbaceous perennials than seasonal bulbs.

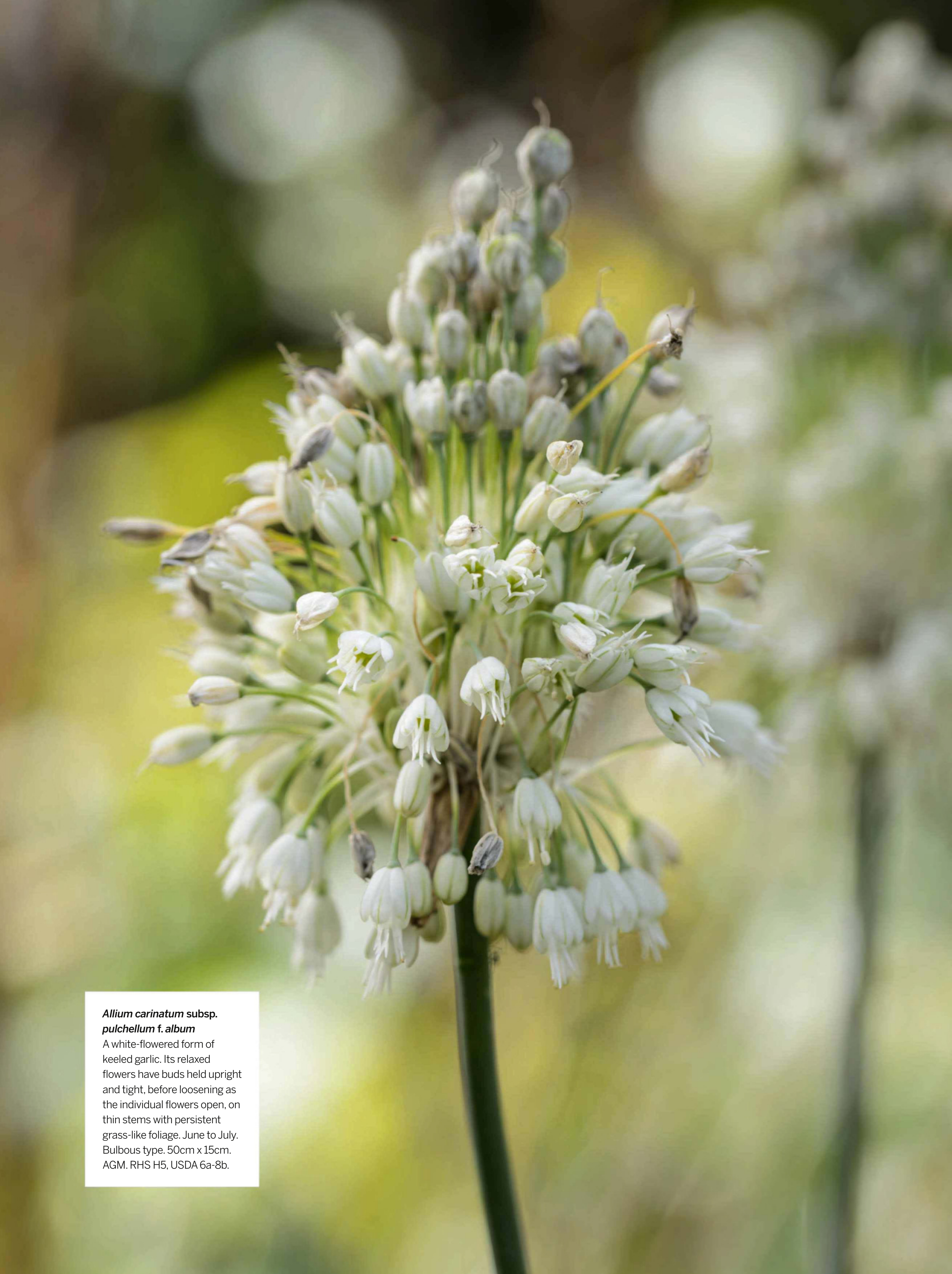
Allium 'Millennium' was one of the first of these. Raised by Massachusetts breeder Mark McDonough, it was released in 2000 to celebrate the millennium, but didn't get much acclaim from the general public until it was awarded Perennial Plant of the Year in the USA in 2018. Within the industry, however, there's been much interest in these summer-flowering herbaceous types, and notable introductions include *A.* 'Lavender Bubbles', *A.* 'Serendipity' and the popular *A. angulosum* 'Summer Beauty'. While all vary in flower and foliage size, colour and timing, they share the characteristics of neat and healthy foliage, coupled with showy flowers in mid to late summer that are followed by clouds of tidy seedheads for autumn.

Many of these introductions are crosses and selections of *A. angulosum*, *A. lusitanicum*, *A. senescens* and *A. wallichii*, so can tolerate enriched and impoverished soils, inclement weather in summer (as well as dry spells) and will grow well in full sun or light shade. Being relatively small in stature and well behaved in growth, they will clump up to form beautiful displays without having the rampant spreading and self-seeding problems that come with some of the bulbous types such as *Allium vineale* 'Hair'. They range in height from 25cm to around 90cm, making them well suited for the smaller garden or at the front of the border, as well as in containers. They

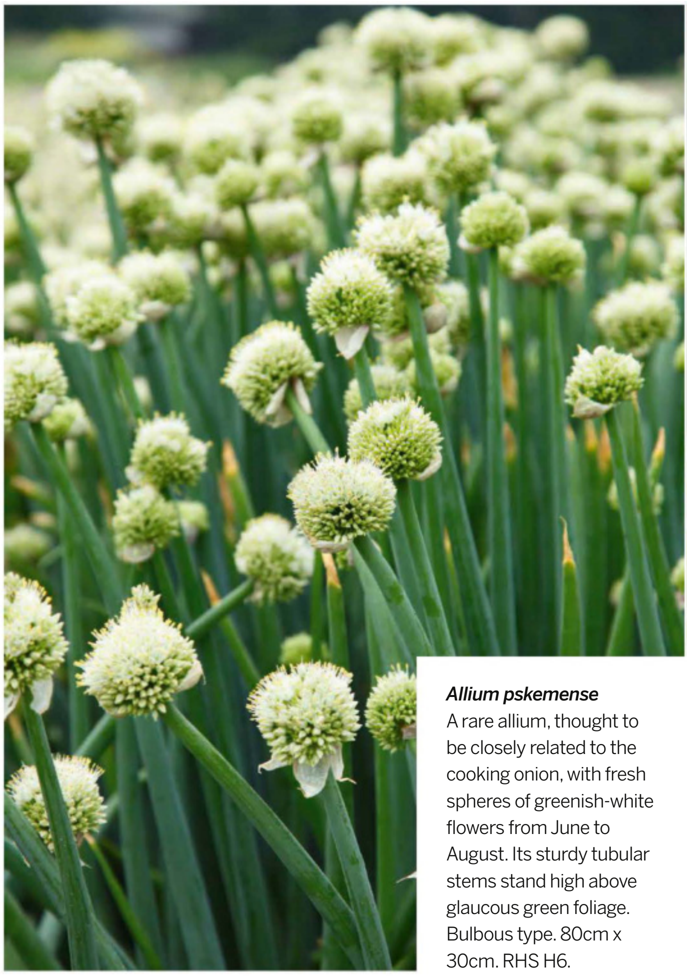
> In recent years there's been a shift in interest and availability for the later, often clump-forming cultivars

To continue turn to page 61 ▷

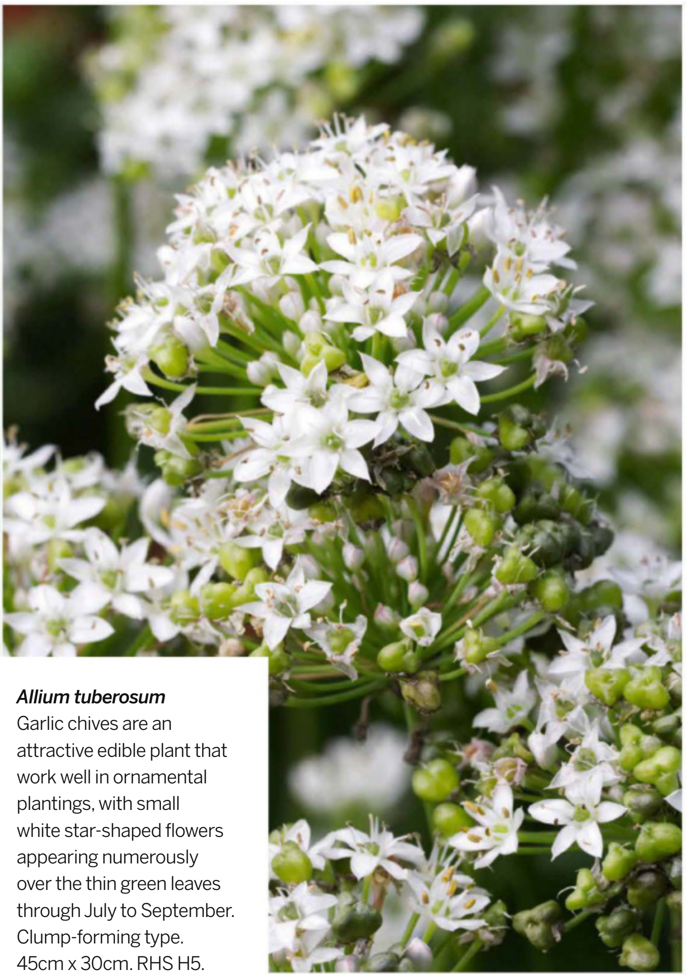
JASON INGRAM



Allium carinatum* subsp. *pulchellum* f. *album
A white-flowered form of keeled garlic. Its relaxed flowers have buds held upright and tight, before loosening as the individual flowers open, on thin stems with persistent grass-like foliage. June to July. Bulbous type. 50cm x 15cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.



Allium pskemense
A rare allium, thought to be closely related to the cooking onion, with fresh spheres of greenish-white flowers from June to August. Its sturdy tubular stems stand high above glaucous green foliage. Bulbous type. 80cm x 30cm. RHS H6.



Allium tuberosum
Garlic chives are an attractive edible plant that work well in ornamental plantings, with small white star-shaped flowers appearing numerously over the thin green leaves through July to September. Clump-forming type. 45cm x 30cm. RHS H5.

JASON INGRAM, ANNAÏCK GUITTENY, CLARE GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

How to grow summer-flowering alliums

• **Alliums are relatively easy to look after** and can be reliably perennial if grown correctly. They perform best in free-draining conditions, as they dislike sitting wet in winter and during their summer dormant period, so avoid heavier clay soils. National Collection holder Jackie Currie recommends lifting the fussier varieties, such as *A. atropurpureum*, allowing them to dry and bake as they would in nature, before replanting early autumn, to ensure a good display.

• **For bulbous types, plant dried bulbs soon after purchase** in late summer or autumn to a depth of approximately three times the height of the bulb.

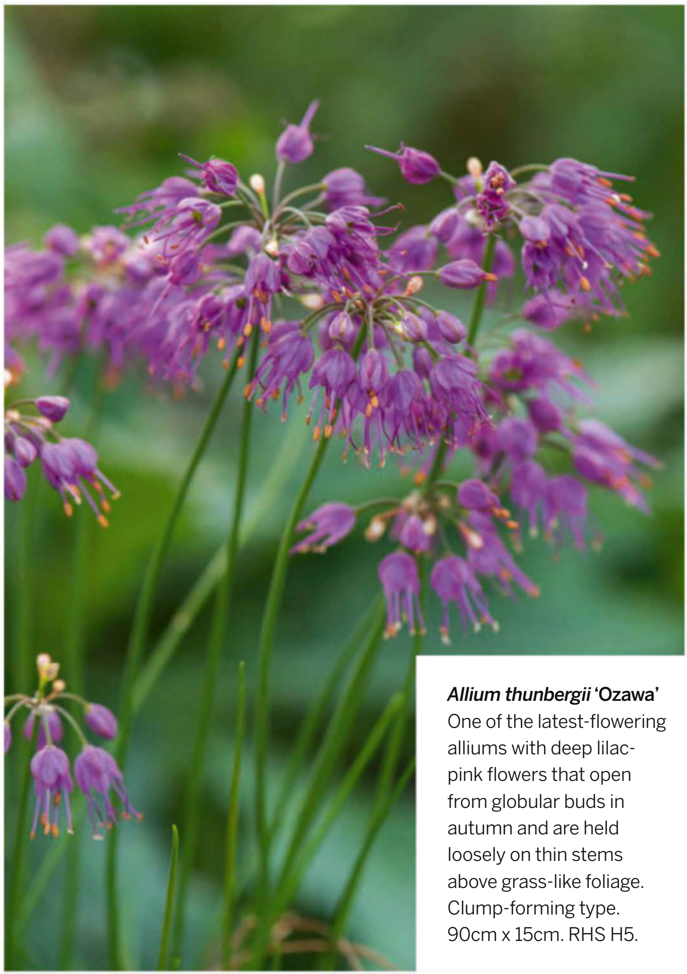
• **For the clump-forming types, it's best to treat them like a herbaceous perennial,** buying container-grown stock and planting in spring or late summer to a depth where the surface of the soil matches that of the potted plant. You may find some suppliers send them out as bareroot plants in early spring, which can be quite good value. These should be planted or potted immediately on arrival to a depth where the pale bulbous section sits below the soil surface, with only the newly emerging leaf tips visible.

• **In time, clumps may become congested.** These should be lifted and divided. For bulbous types this is best done in summer after flowering. Use a border fork to carefully lift and dislodge the bulbs, selecting and replanting the biggest and relocating any leftovers. Herbaceous types tend to be happier as dense clumps, though you can lift and divide in spring and late summer if needed. Simply dig up the entire clump, before using a couple of forks to gently split into smaller sections, before replanting or potting.

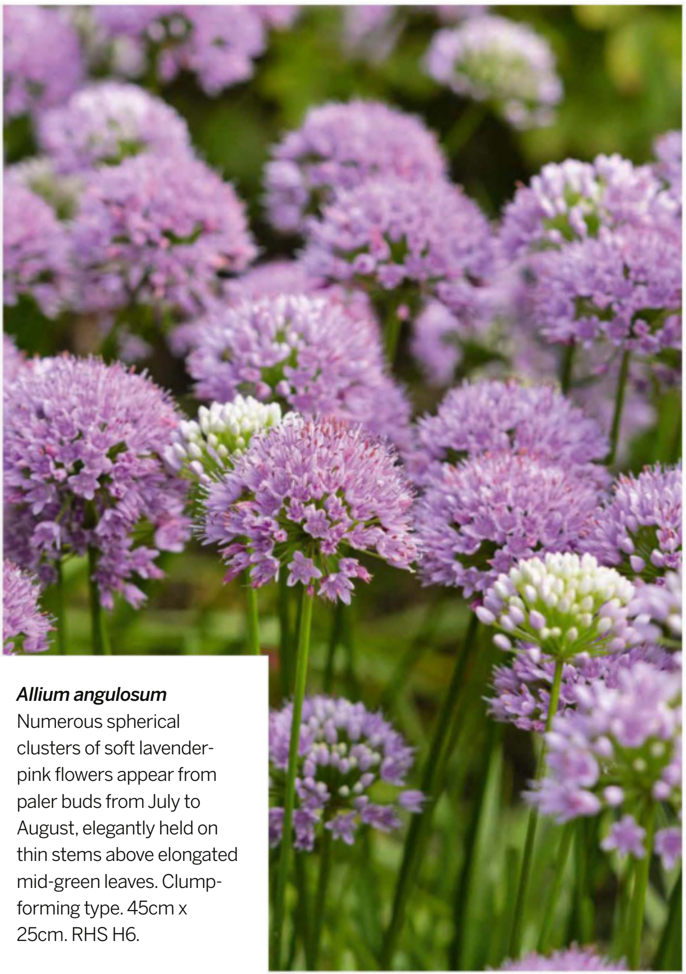
• **Some alliums are vigorous self-seeders** or multiplying with the production of bulbils that are produced in the soil or in the centre of the flower. Generally, only a handful of the bulbous ornamental types and culinary varieties, such as chives, are a problem. Prompt deadheading after flowering, before the seeds are ripe and have dispersed, will help ease the problem.

• **Alliums a can be grown in containers.** Good drainage is key and they're best grown in a soil-based compost such as John Innes No.3.

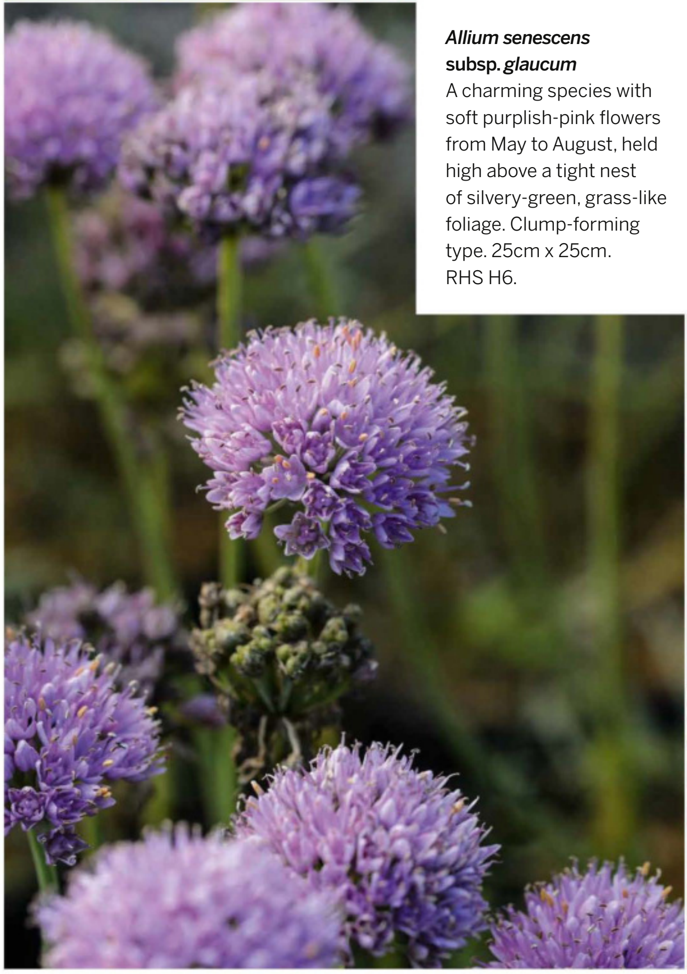
• **Ornamental onions are generally pest and disease free**. Fungal diseases, such as mildews and rusts, can be a problem, more so on edibles grown close together. Removing affected foliage and improving growing conditions will help. Their strong taste makes them less desirable to deer, rabbits, slugs, mice and pigeons.



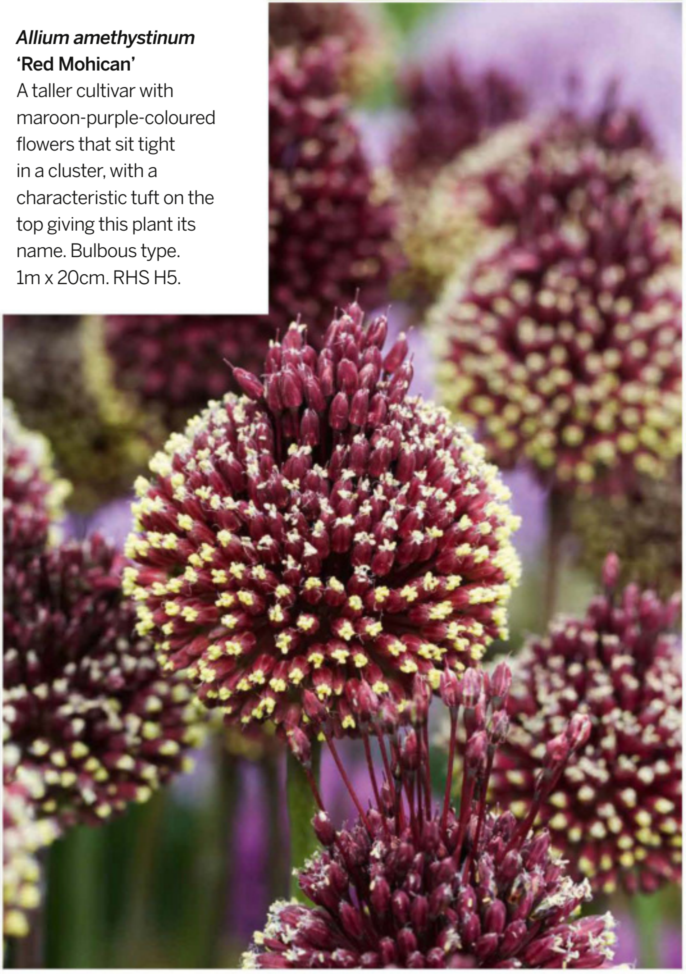
***Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawa'**
One of the latest-flowering alliums with deep lilac-pink flowers that open from globular buds in autumn and are held loosely on thin stems above grass-like foliage. Clump-forming type. 90cm x 15cm. RHS H5.



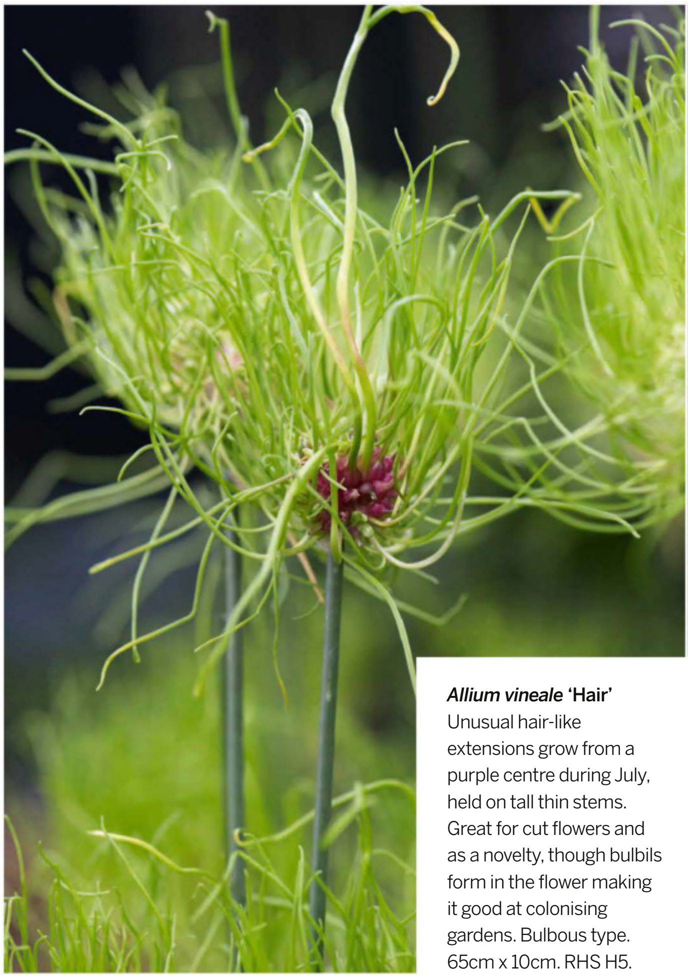
Allium angulosum
Numerous spherical clusters of soft lavender-pink flowers appear from paler buds from July to August, elegantly held on thin stems above elongated mid-green leaves. Clump-forming type. 45cm x 25cm. RHS H6.



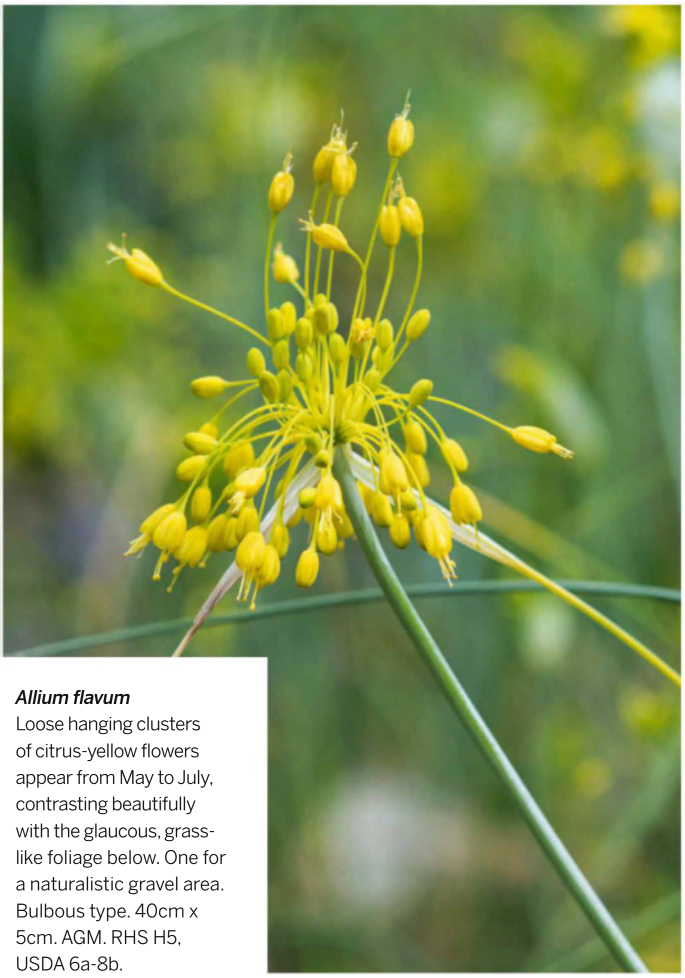
Allium senescens* subsp. *glaucum
A charming species with soft purplish-pink flowers from May to August, held high above a tight nest of silvery-green, grass-like foliage. Clump-forming type. 25cm x 25cm. RHS H6.



***Allium amethystinum* 'Red Mohican'**
A taller cultivar with maroon-purple-coloured flowers that sit tight in a cluster, with a characteristic tuft on the top giving this plant its name. Bulbous type. 1m x 20cm. RHS H5.



***Allium vineale* 'Hair'**
Unusual hair-like extensions grow from a purple centre during July, held on tall thin stems. Great for cut flowers and as a novelty, though bulbils form in the flower making it good at colonising gardens. Bulbous type. 65cm x 10cm. RHS H5.



Allium flavum
Loose hanging clusters of citrus-yellow flowers appear from May to July, contrasting beautifully with the glaucous, grass-like foliage below. One for a naturalistic gravel area. Bulbous type. 40cm x 5cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

▷ also work well in gravel gardens and naturalistic plantings, where *A. senescens* subsp. *glaucum* will appreciate the drier conditions. In contrast, *A. angulosum* and *A. nutans* will sit happily below a rose in a lightly shaded spot.

> *Allium angulosum* and *A. nutans* will sit happily below a rose in a lightly shaded spot

When pairing them with other plants, it's best to select plants that are also well behaved and won't smother them. In a cottage-garden-style setting, you could include summer-flowering *Calamintha nepeta* 'Blue Cloud', *Origanum* 'Rosenkuppel', *Nepeta racemosa* 'Amelia' and contrasting *Hylotelephium* 'Red Cauli', along with some of the small lighter salvias such as *Salvia* 'Nachtvlinder' or *S.* 'Blue Note'. For a more natural look, plant medium-to-large varieties alongside well-behaved ornamental grasses such as *Miscanthus nepalensis*, *Molinia caerulea* 'Moorhexe' or *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah', including the lovely white umbels of *Ligustrum lucidum*, zesty *Euphorbia seguieriana* and *Serratula tinctoria* var. *seoanei*, perhaps with *Phlox* x *arendsii* 'Hesperis' and *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow' for additional late colour. At the front of a hot, sunny border, the smaller varieties will sit well alongside bearded irises, *Origanum* 'Bristol Cross' and *Verbena officinalis* 'Bampton'.

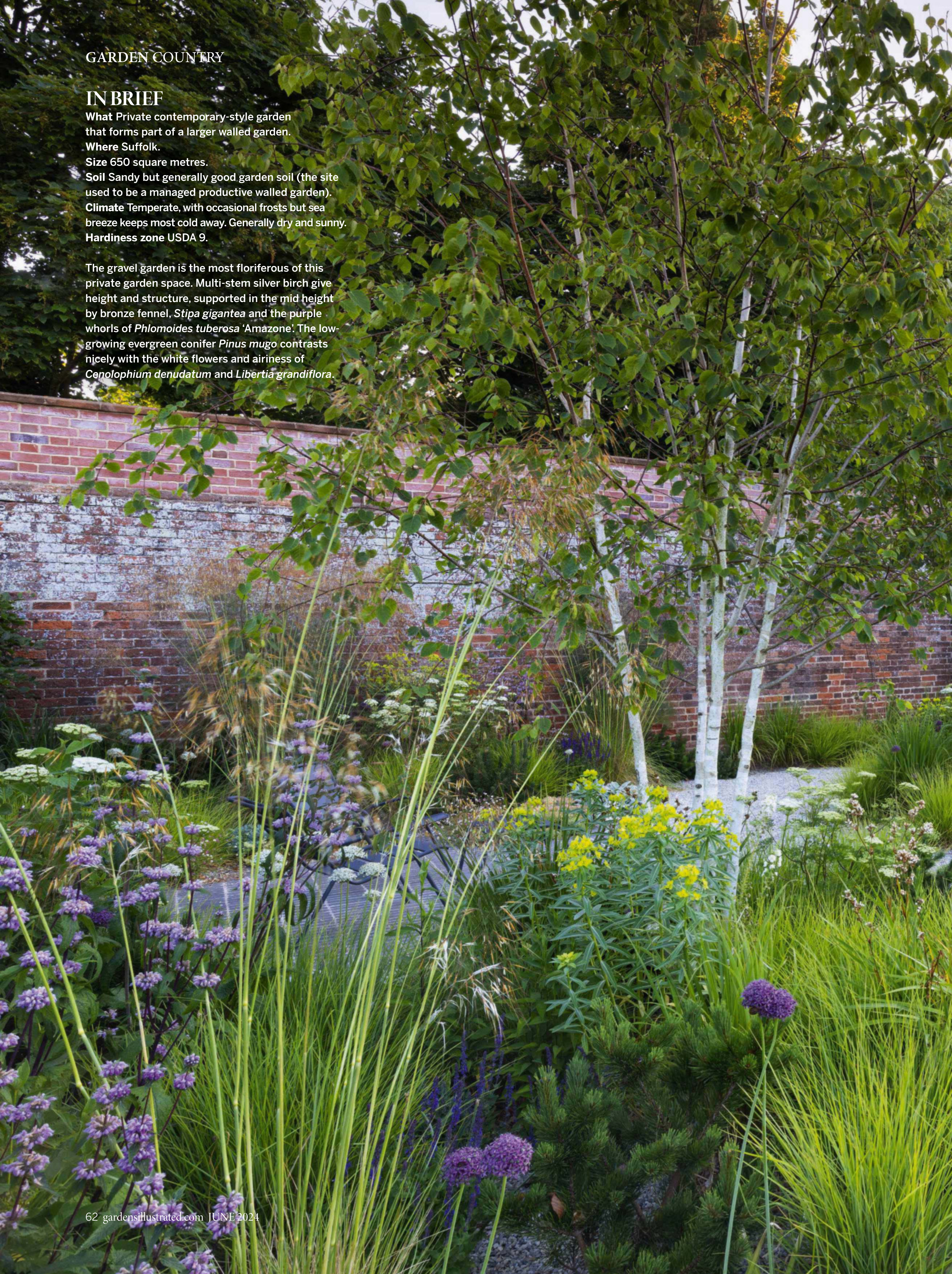
When choosing cultivars of herbaceous types you can't go far wrong with *A.* 'Millennium' and *A.* 'Lavender Bubbles', both of which have rich-purple flowers. For something softer, *A. angulosum* 'Summer Beauty' is a superb option and *A. wallichii* is great for a taller type with more intense colour, though it is slower to bulk up.

Some of the perennial culinary alliums are worth a go too. *A. fistulosum* (Welsh onion) has large tubular leaves that are dramatic in the herb bed or at the front of a border, along with garlic chives, which sit neatly with their white umbels. For added excitement, I'd include a few bulbous types, such as *A.* 'Miami' with its dark metallic-purple spheres or super-tall *A.* 'Summer Drummer', with stems over 2m tall topped with dense, soft-lilac balls. ❑

Benjamin Pope is a head gardener and garden writer.

Where to see and buy
- **Jackie Currie** 11 Oak Close, Chiddingfold, Surrey GU8 4SA. National Collection holder; opens garden by appointment. plantheritage.org.uk
- **Cotswold Garden Flowers** Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ. Tel 01386 833849, cotswoldgardenflowers.co.uk
- **Kevock Garden Plants** Kevock Road, Lasswade, Midlothian EH18 1HX. Tel 0131 454 0660, kevockgarden.co.uk
- **WS Warmenhoven** A Dutch family nursery specialising in alliums. Mail order only. warmenhoven.co.uk

MAAYKE DE RIDDER, STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, JASON INGRAM,
CLARE GAINEY / GAP PHOTOS, TIM GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, TIM GAINEY / GAP PHOTOS



IN BRIEF

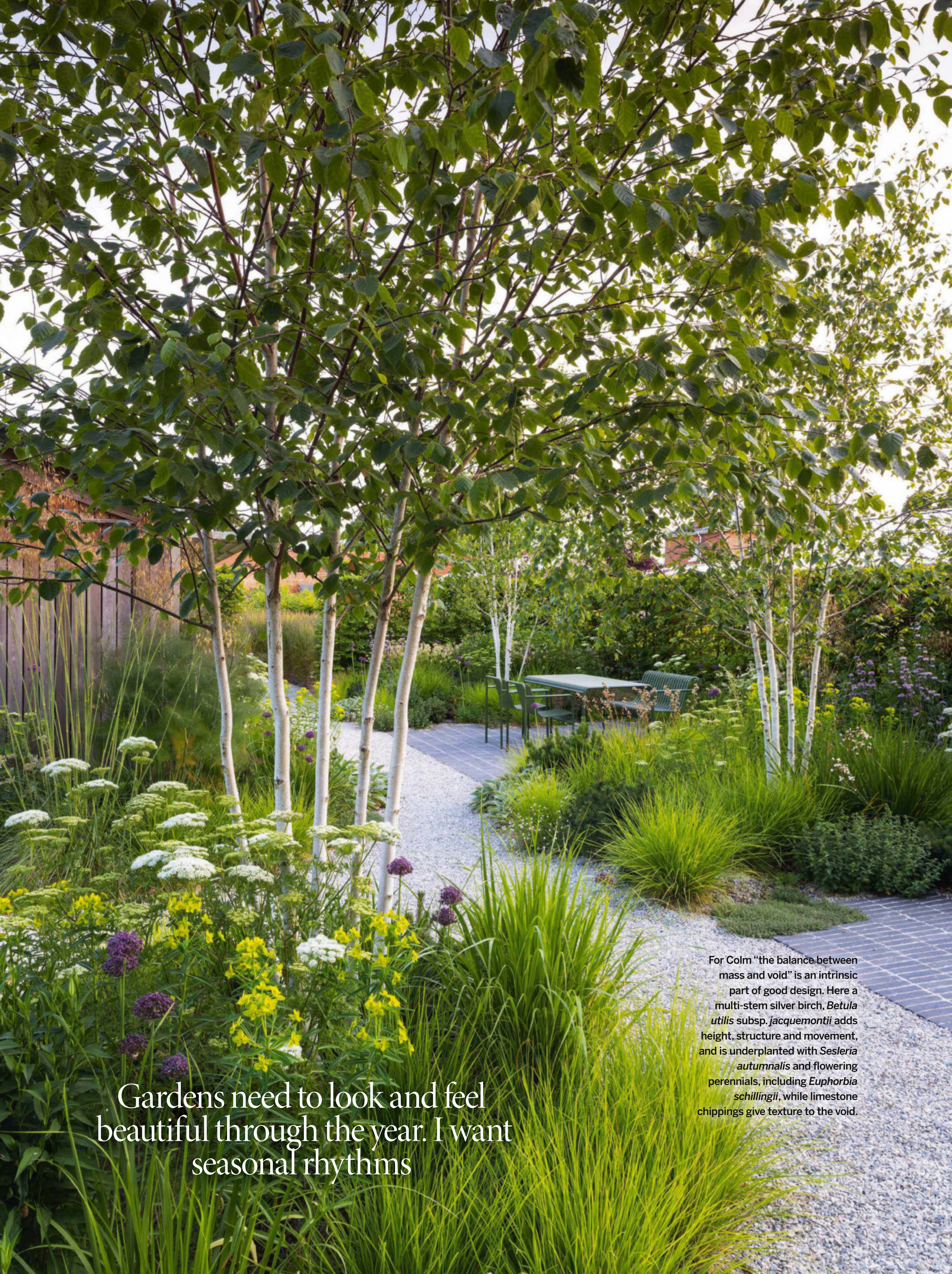
What Private contemporary-style garden that forms part of a larger walled garden.
Where Suffolk.
Size 650 square metres.
Soil Sandy but generally good garden soil (the site used to be a managed productive walled garden).
Climate Temperate, with occasional frosts but sea breeze keeps most cold away. Generally dry and sunny.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The gravel garden is the most floriferous of this private garden space. Multi-stem silver birch give height and structure, supported in the mid height by bronze fennel, *Stipa gigantea* and the purple whorls of *Phlomoides tuberosa* ‘Amazone’. The low-growing evergreen conifer *Pinus mugo* contrasts nicely with the white flowers and airiness of *Cenolophium denudatum* and *Libertia grandiflora*.

FRESH APPROACH

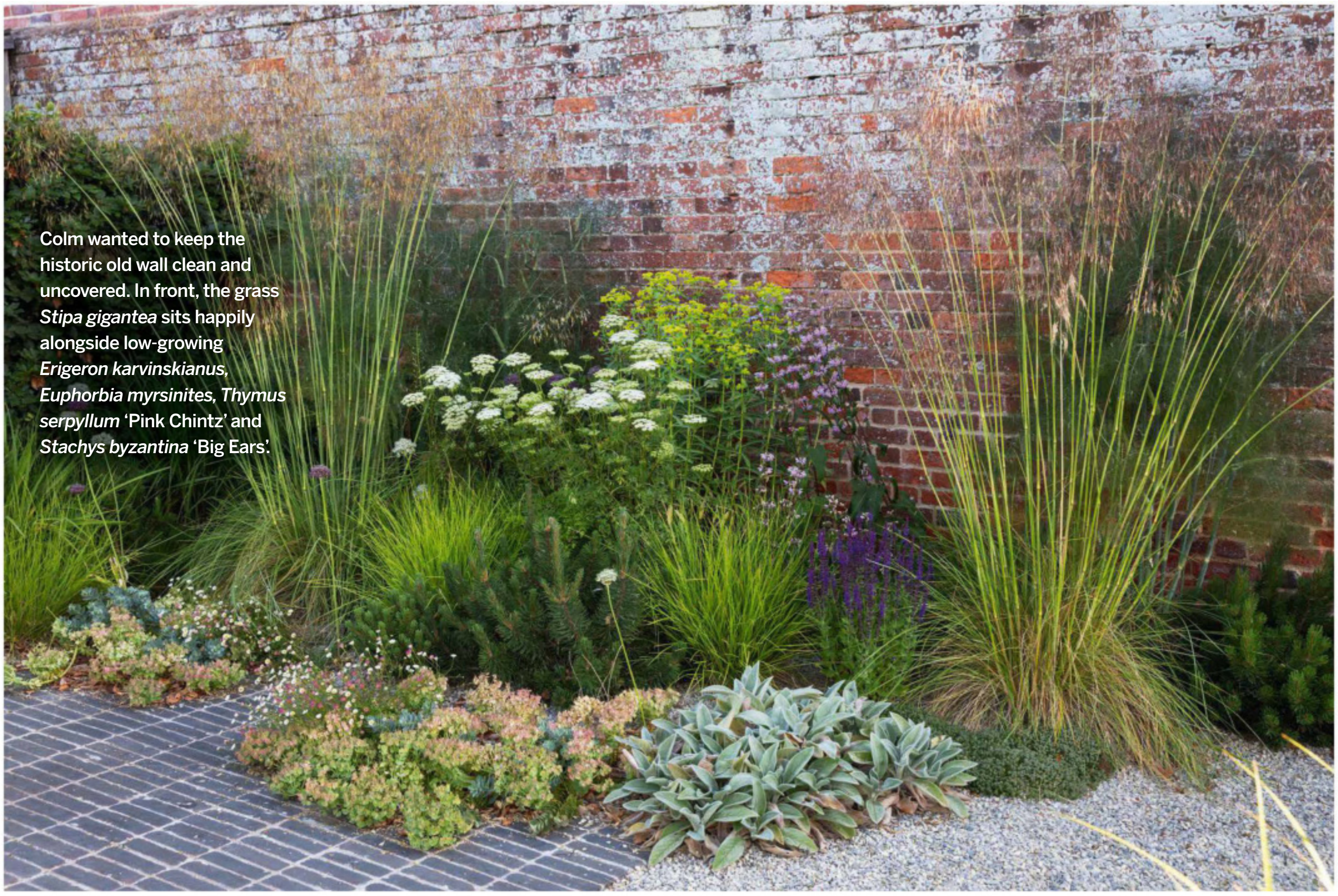
Colm Joseph's design for this new garden, which surrounds a modern house within a heritage setting, uses clever planting to give a historic site a contemporary feel

WORDS **CHRIS YOUNG** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



Gardens need to look and feel beautiful through the year. I want seasonal rhythms

For Colm "the balance between mass and void" is an intrinsic part of good design. Here a multi-stem silver birch, *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii* adds height, structure and movement, and is underplanted with *Sesleria autumnalis* and flowering perennials, including *Euphorbia schillingii*, while limestone chippings give texture to the void.



Colm wanted to keep the historic old wall clean and uncovered. In front, the grass *Stipa gigantea* sits happily alongside low-growing *Erigeron karvinskianus*, *Euphorbia myrsinites*, *Thymus serpyllum* 'Pink Chintz' and *Stachys byzantina* 'Big Ears'.

Just as parents aren't meant to have a favourite child, garden designers aren't meant to have a favourite project. And even though designer Colm Joseph would never admit to having preferential feelings for this scheme, he does agree that "it is certainly one of my most important". From concept to execution, and from client buy-in to project maturation, it's clearly a garden that gives Colm a great sense of pride.

Situated just three miles from the East Anglian coast, this site in Suffolk is one of ten properties that was created as part of a walled garden development adjoining a country house. "The new property sits in the middle of the site. It's single storey, as the architects took inspiration from the former glasshouses that occupied the walled garden," explains Colm. Pitched roofs, timber cladding and glass hallways are all horticultural references to the former buildings and work as a perfect backdrop for the garden. The result is a modern house with four different garden spaces orbiting around it.

Before he could establish a design concept, Colm needed to look more broadly at the setting. "I often try to connect my gardens to their location," he explains, "and here I looked to the wider landscape and site history." The naturalistic and loose planting is redolent of the Suffolk coast and neighbouring heathland, which is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Three tree types – pines, beech and silver birch – are characteristic of the arboreal planting locally; and the hedging and topiary reference the garden-making skill of the estate's past. The pavers used visually connect to the historic walls.

The garden is, in plan form, pretty simple. At the back, the space is cut into three: a productive garden with raised beds; a 'transition space' wildflower meadow; and the main, planted gravel garden. The front garden is the most sculptural and modern: beech cylinders are surrounded by hundreds of plants of the tall, ornamental grass *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'. "We wanted a visually striking approach to the house," Colm explains.

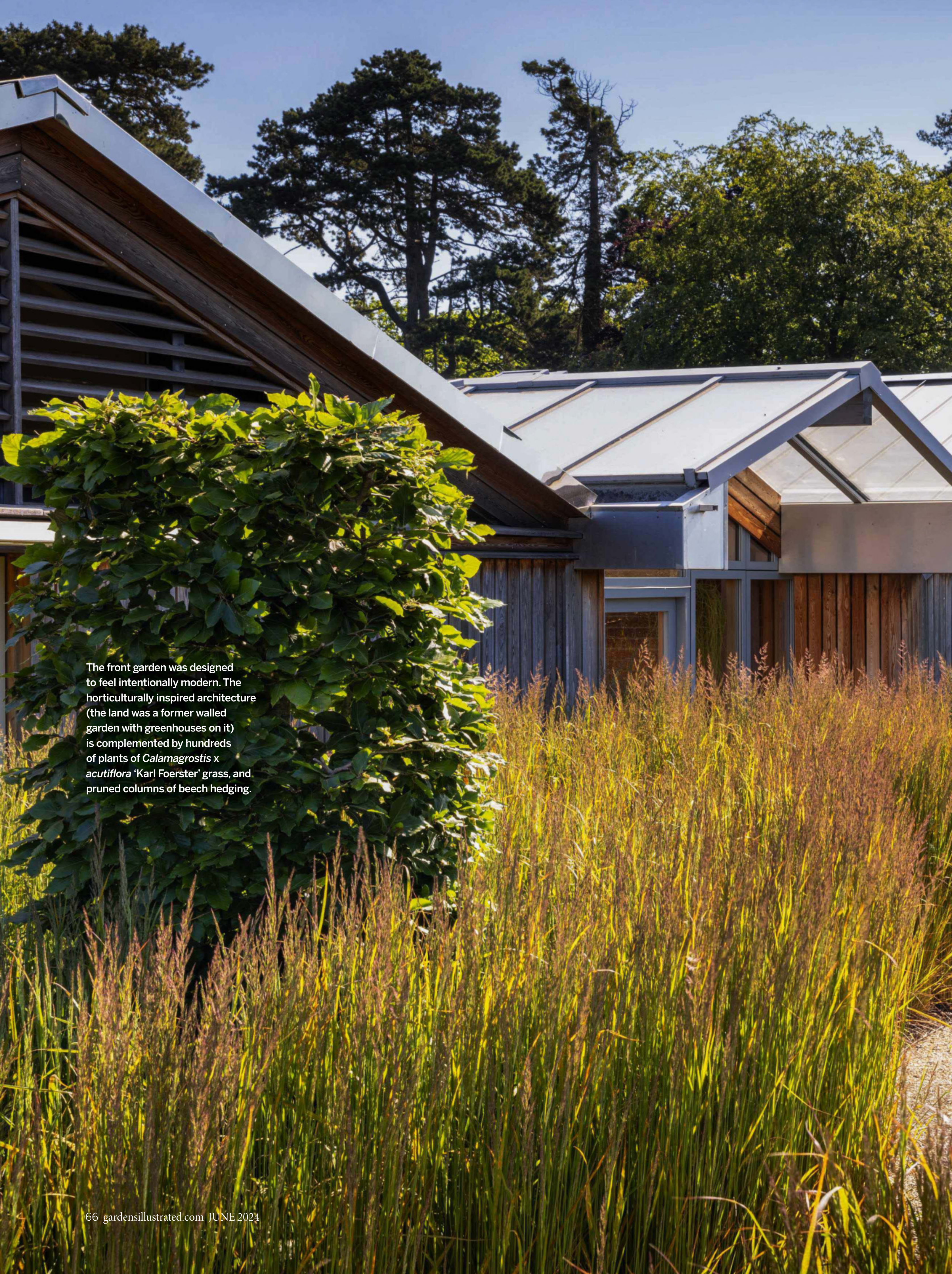
He loves to layer his gardens, both in meaning and planting. Take the trees. Instead of just planting a few of the same trees that grow outside the site, he's used the same species but made them appropriate for the design: beech for divisional hedging; evergreen dwarf pines; and multi-stem silver birch as focal points. It's a subtle touch, but once you know it's there, it makes the experience richer.

So too his layering of plants through the season. "Seasonal longevity is crucial in a garden," he explains. "Gardens need to look and feel beautiful through the year. Rather than it being about lots of static evergreens, I want seasonal rhythms – it's the natural experience of how things change and alter."

This means that Colm works hard to ensure that every plant earns its place. That can be perennials that have emerging leaves, flower well and then offer interesting autumn structure, such as sage-leaf mullein, *Phlomoides tuberosa* 'Amazone', with great purple whorls; or grasses, such as Korean feather reed grass, *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, which has late-summer fluffy sprays of flowers and yellow autumn foliage.

How you work with – and reference – the heritage of the site is a challenge. In this instance, the original red-brick wall was, in Colm's eyes, not only ▷

To continue turn to page 68



The front garden was designed to feel intentionally modern. The horticulturally inspired architecture (the land was a former walled garden with greenhouses on it) is complemented by hundreds of plants of *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' grass, and pruned columns of beech hedging.

I often try to connect my gardens to their location, and here I looked to the wider landscape and site history

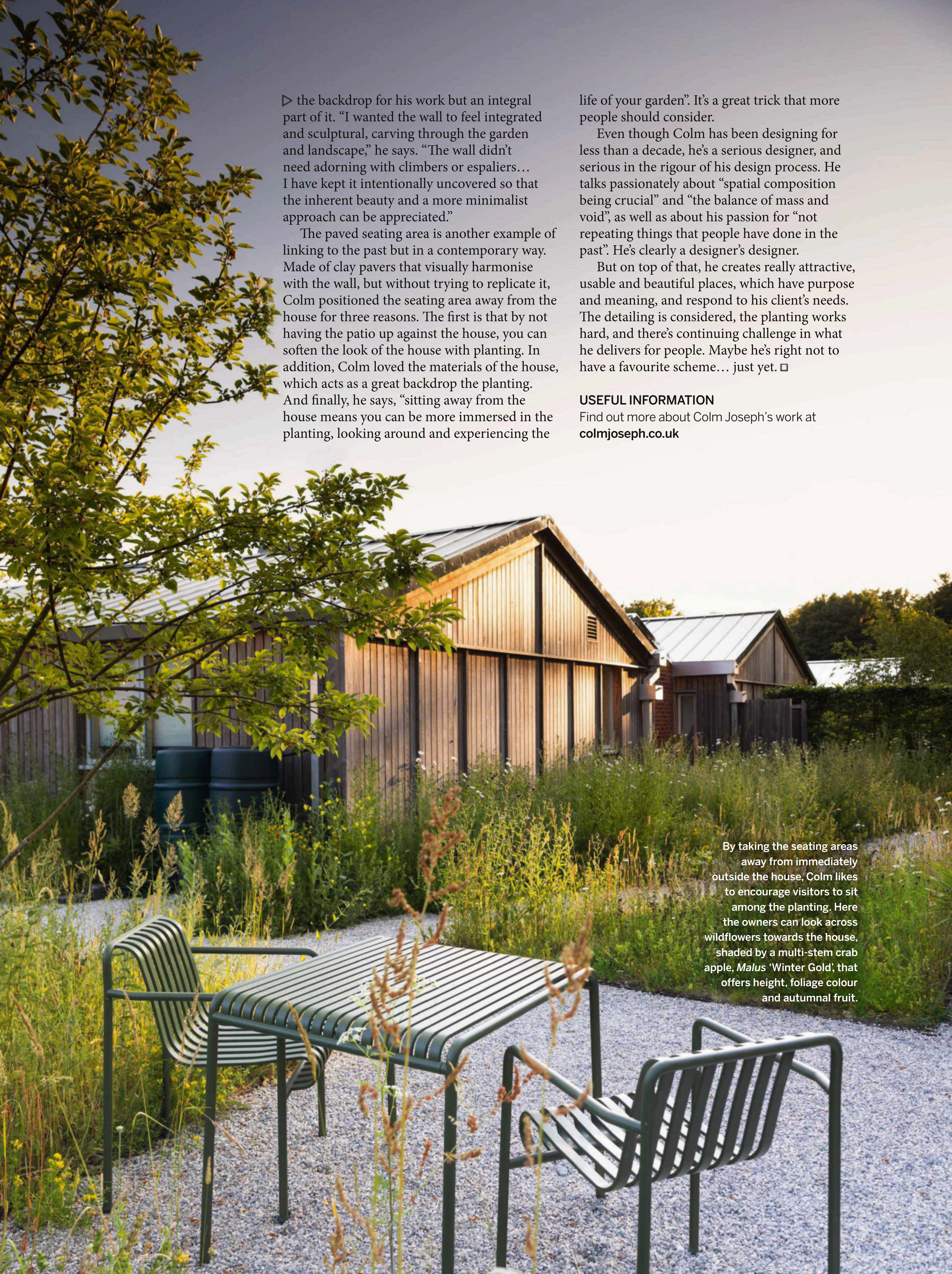
▷ the backdrop for his work but an integral part of it. “I wanted the wall to feel integrated and sculptural, carving through the garden and landscape,” he says. “The wall didn’t need adorning with climbers or espaliers… I have kept it intentionally uncovered so that the inherent beauty and a more minimalist approach can be appreciated.”

The paved seating area is another example of linking to the past but in a contemporary way. Made of clay pavers that visually harmonise with the wall, but without trying to replicate it, Colm positioned the seating area away from the house for three reasons. The first is that by not having the patio up against the house, you can soften the look of the house with planting. In addition, Colm loved the materials of the house, which acts as a great backdrop the planting. And finally, he says, “sitting away from the house means you can be more immersed in the planting, looking around and experiencing the life of your garden”. It’s a great trick that more people should consider.

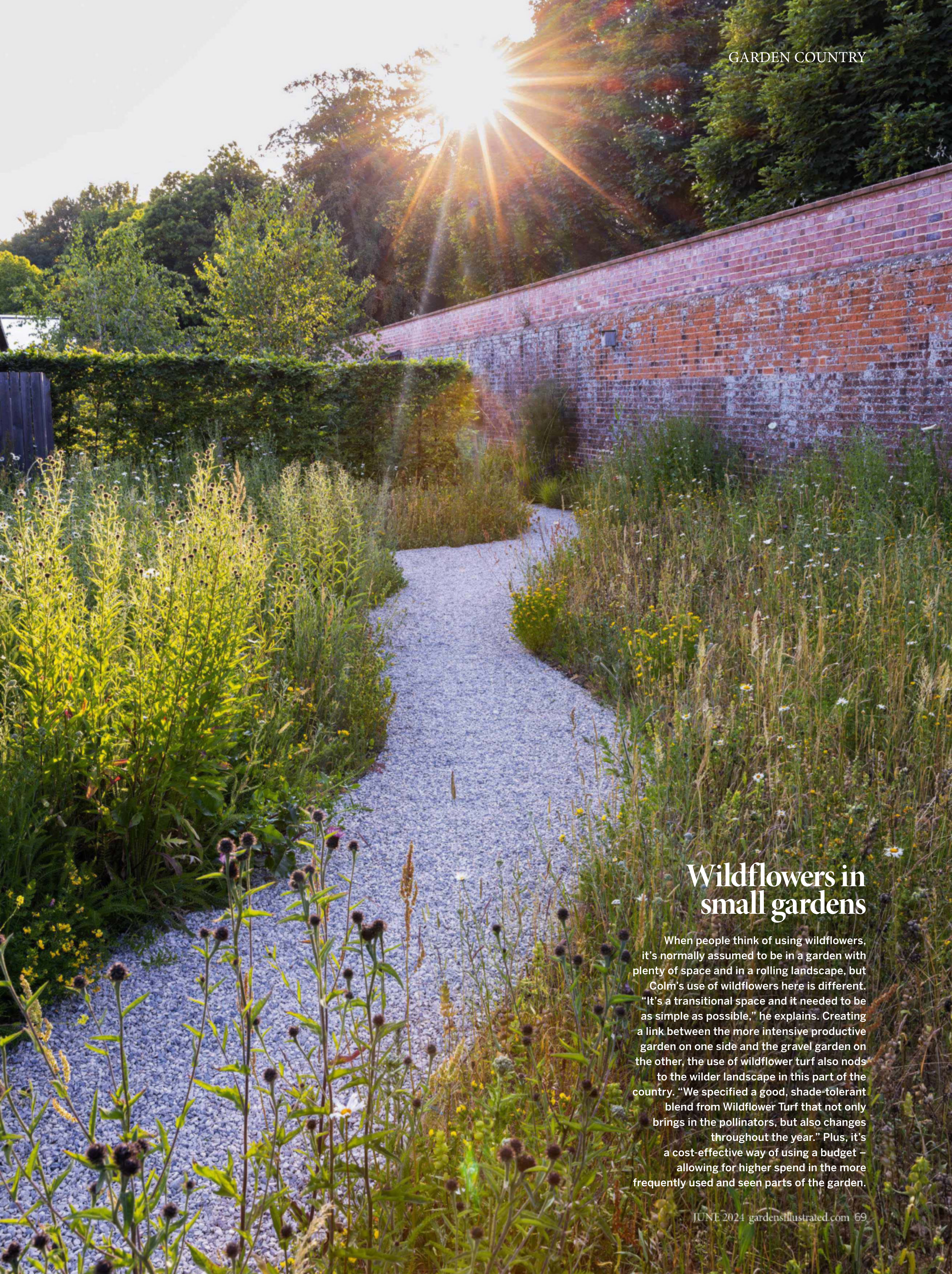
Even though Colm has been designing for less than a decade, he’s a serious designer, and serious in the rigour of his design process. He talks passionately about “spatial composition being crucial” and “the balance of mass and void”, as well as about his passion for “not repeating things that people have done in the past”. He’s clearly a designer’s designer.

But on top of that, he creates really attractive, usable and beautiful places, which have purpose and meaning, and respond to his client’s needs. The detailing is considered, the planting works hard, and there’s continuing challenge in what he delivers for people. Maybe he’s right not to have a favourite scheme… just yet. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Colm Joseph’s work at **colmjoseph.co.uk**



By taking the seating areas away from immediately outside the house, Colm likes to encourage visitors to sit among the planting. Here the owners can look across wildflowers towards the house, shaded by a multi-stem crab apple, *Malus* ‘Winter Gold’, that offers height, foliage colour and autumnal fruit.



Wildflowers in small gardens

When people think of using wildflowers, it's normally assumed to be in a garden with plenty of space and in a rolling landscape, but Colm's use of wildflowers here is different. "It's a transitional space and it needed to be as simple as possible," he explains. Creating a link between the more intensive productive garden on one side and the gravel garden on the other, the use of wildflower turf also nods to the wilder landscape in this part of the country. "We specified a good, shade-tolerant blend from Wildflower Turf that not only brings in the pollinators, but also changes throughout the year." Plus, it's a cost-effective way of using a budget – allowing for higher spend in the more frequently used and seen parts of the garden.

ANNIE GUILFOYLE

The garden polymath on the pleasures of passing on knowledge, the rewards of close observation and the circuitous route towards grounding her itchy feet

WORDS JODIE JONES PORTRAIT JOHN CAMPBELL

For someone whose life is built around the creation of beautiful gardens, Annie Guilfoyle has remarkably itchy feet. She teaches several prestigious garden design courses in this country, including at West Dean and Great Dixter, but also lectures as far afield as Pennsylvania and Poland.

She is an obsessive Italophile and travels there annually for the Bergamo landscape festival (she's on the selection committee), to run workshops, and at any other opportunity she gets. She designs gardens up and down the country, and the Garden Masterclass events she runs with garden writer Noel Kingsbury only add to her mileage.

"I have always loved to travel, to go to new places and meet interesting people," she says. "I grew up on Exmoor in the middle of nowhere, which was very beautiful but isolated. When you start life somewhere like that, you know that you will have to get out and make an effort."

As a child she treated school as a social club, and all her reports said that she would do well if only she would stop talking so much. Instead, she left before sixth form, and trained as a riding instructor. "Horses were my passion at that stage, even though I had to walk two miles just to ride one. I dreamed of competing at the Badminton Horse Trials, but in my heart I knew it was never going to happen, so after a couple of years I decided to get out and see the world instead."

Although she had never previously travelled further than France on a school trip, she headed off to Canada to work as a nanny. "It was great. I stayed for a couple of years, but I was curious to see Europe so eventually I went to Italy. The minute I got there I fell in love with everything – the people, the language, the landscape, and the way they can argue for hours about the best way to make a particular kind of risotto."

Her passion for Italy has never diminished but, after working abroad for more than a decade, she eventually decided it was time to come home and get a 'proper' job. There followed London-based stints in backstage theatre and publishing. "But at a certain point in life, your hormones turn to horticulture. One day I realised that the life I was living wasn't enough, so I signed up to study horticulture part-time at Capel Manor College.

"My father was a great gardener, so I guess it was always there inside me. I had filled the lightwell outside my London flat with planters made out of old wooden wine crates and ended up winning the Westminster in Bloom Best Basement Garden Award. Once I started studying horticulture, I knew I had found my people, my world."

When Middlesex University launched the first Garden Design degree in Europe, Annie gave up her publishing job and threw herself into full-time study. Suddenly the girl who couldn't settle at school was an academic success – in just her first year on the course she won a competition to design a garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show – and straight after graduation she re-joined the university as a lecturer.

"I discovered that I love teaching. I get such pleasure out of passing on knowledge, seeing my students develop, then helping to place them in good positions." And her students love her back. Many of them have gone on to build award-winning careers based on her unique blend of sound business advice, solid hard work and enthusiastically creative stimulation. "I tell them all to sign up for a life-drawing class. They think I'm mad, but it teaches you to observe closely, and that's the most important skill for a garden designer."

> MY LIFE IS A CRAZY SMORGASBORD, BUT WHAT WOULD I GIVE UP? I LOVE IT ALL

She worked as director of garden design at KLC School of Design for 18 years and, when she finally left, established Garden Masterclass with Noel Kingsbury. "In fact, that started because of *Gardens Illustrated*. Juliet Roberts, who was editor at the time, asked us to curate some live events for the magazine and we decided to roll out the concept around the country, so we could offer learning days and webinars to the widest possible range of people."

Even now, at an age when many might think about retiring, she gets an evangelical gleam in her eyes as she talks about sharing her knowledge, introducing people, celebrating design and exploring new ideas. "My life is a crazy smorgasbord, but what would I give up? I love it all."

If anything, she continues to take on even more activities – Italian lessons to refine her grasp of the grammar, art courses at West Dean, film making (her biopic on Keith Wiley of Wildside garden was shortlisted for a Garden Media Guild Award), and support for the Tuppenny Barn charity, near her home in West Sussex, which educates and inspires communities to learn about organic food. She even finds time to ride occasionally.

"Studying drawing and painting taught me to enjoy the process and not fixate on the end result," she says. "We put so much stress on ourselves to create a finished product, when it is actually the journey that is important. There is a big world out there, and I don't want to miss any of it." ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Garden Masterclass at **gardenmasterclass.org**

PERFECT HARMONY

Rosarian Michael Marriott and TV producer Rosie Irving have very different ideas on gardening, but they have discovered the secret to sharing a single plot amicably

WORDS **TAMSIN WESTHORPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

IN BRIEF

What A garden of two halves, one wild and the other designed.
Where Shropshire.
Size Three quarters of an acre.
Soil Neutral clay soil.
Climate High rainfall and partly exposed site.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Rosie's area of the garden is home to several roses, including the wonderfully fragrant, pink China rose *R.* 'Sophie's Perpetual' in the foreground that starts flowering very early in the year, and the bright-orange *R.* Summer Song (= 'Austango') that stands out above the froth of white garlic cress, *Peltaria alliacea*.

Rosa 'Rambling Rector' grows up the side of the house and *R.* 'Adélaïde d'Orléans' covers an arch behind it. The former is strongly fragrant and sets hips while the latter is only very lightly fragrant and sets no hips but is still one of the best ramblers.

One person's love can be another's loathing. Letting weeds float in and out of borders might please some, but offend others. Creating a garden is very personal, so it's no wonder that gardeners might struggle to share a space, spending many precious hours arguing over plans and plants.

Michael Marriott and Rosie Irving met 14 years ago through their work in horticulture, and have shared their Shropshire garden for the past ten years by having their own designated areas. Their decision to divide the garden and the success of this idea has proved that two gardeners can successfully transform a space into something magical that reflects their personalities.

"When I first gardened alongside Michael, I would say things like 'Oh dearest, wouldn't that look better further down?' He would never reply, he'd just smile and then carry on, so this was when I thought of the idea of having our own areas. This way we have harmony," explains Rosie.

Michael was the leading rose expert at David Austin Roses for 35 years, and is the most knowledgeable rosarian in the country, if not in the world. "Rosie didn't like roses when I met her, but I have changed her mind," he says. Rosie is a well-respected horticultural TV producer and consultant and has been involved with some of Britain's most-watched gardening shows, such as *Love Your Garden* and *Garden Rescue*. Together, they have more knowledge than one gardening brain could hold, and so many of their skills are evident in the garden. "We moved to this Victorian house ten years ago," says Michael. "What appealed to us both was that we didn't like the garden. It meant we could pretty much start from scratch." He believes that the house was once home to the gardener of the nearby school, which explains why the soil is so good.

You would assume that the easiest way to share a garden is simply to draw an imaginary line down the middle, but Rosie and Michael have done nothing of the sort. Their areas weave in and out of each other so that they can both enjoy working in sun and shade. "Rosie's areas are more gardened and designed, while mine are wilder," says Michael. "I love Rosie's part of the garden as it's so different to mine, being more formal, with a wonderful use of colour and form. I also really like all the roses she's incorporated, very nearly all of which I heartily approve of."

The entrance to the garden is enchanting, a picket gate with an arch of *Rosa* 'Adélaïde d'Orléans' overhead. To the right is the meadow, which sits at the top of the ▷

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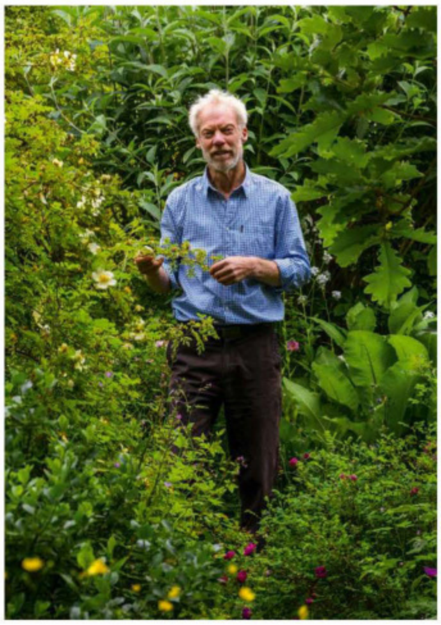
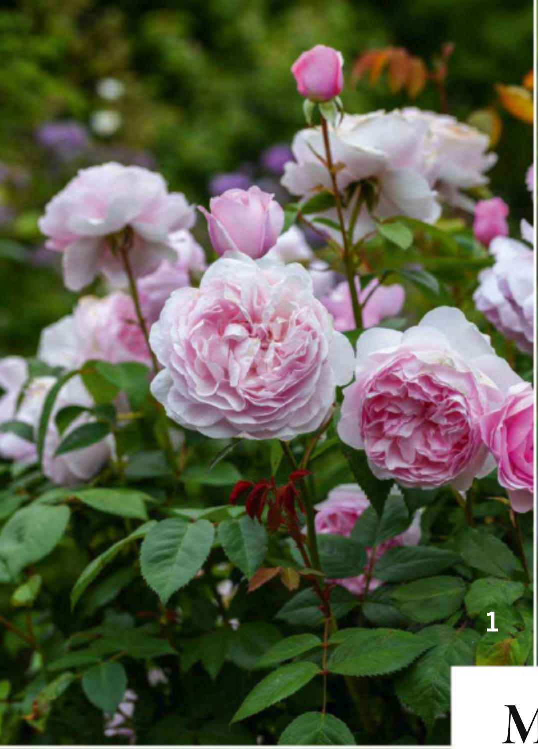


We are big recyclers and are always on the hunt for bargains. We'll head to the reject area of a nursery to see if we can nurse something back to health

You would assume that the easiest way to share a garden is simply to draw an imaginary line down the middle, but Rosie and Michael have done nothing of the sort

Michael's meadow is one of the couple's favourite places to sit and enjoy the views of the Clee Hills. It is home to around 45 of Michael's beloved ant hills, which can make scything a challenge.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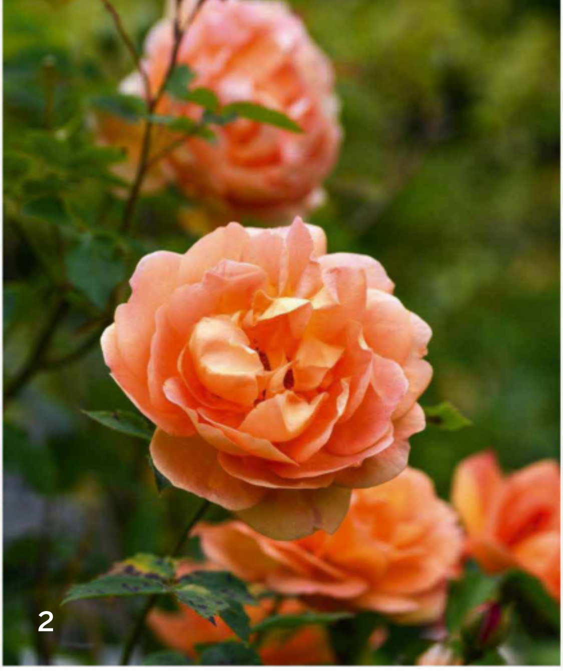
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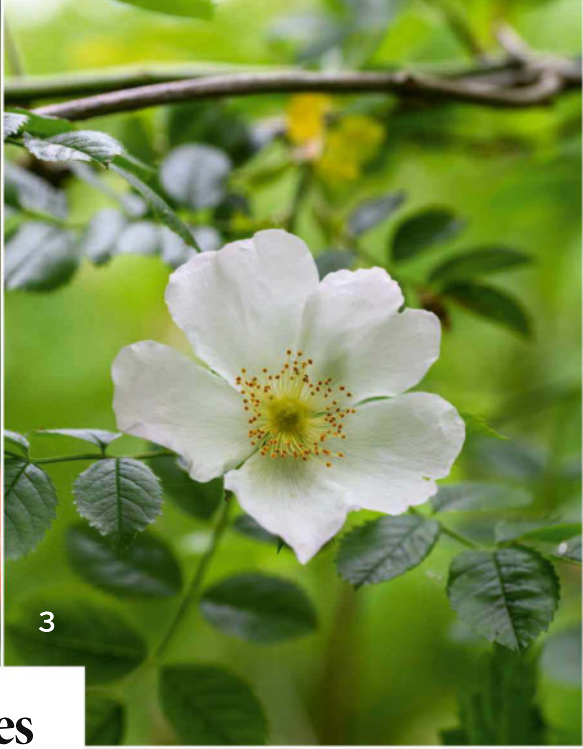

3

Michael Marriott's top 9 roses

1 ***Rosa*** **Olivia Rose Austin (= 'Ausmixture')** A particularly healthy cultivar with large, very double, soft pink flowers. It repeat flowers very quickly and has a light fruity scent. Height and spread: 1.25m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b[†].

2 ***Rosa*** **Lady of Shalott (= 'Ausnys')** One of the best English shrub roses with large apricot-orange blooms that are produced very freely. 1.5m x 1.5m (can also grow as a climber to more like 3m). AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 ***Rosa*** **Kew Gardens (= 'Ausfence')** A particularly tough rose that grows and flowers well even in the shade. It is completely thornless. Excellent in a border or as a hedge. 1.25m x 1.25m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

4 ***Rosa*** **'Adélaïde d'Orléans'** One of the most beautiful ramblers. Pink buds open up into semi-double, pure-white blooms. Very lax growth makes it easy to train. 6m x 4m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

5 ***Rosa*** **Mary Delany (= 'Ausorts')** A repeat-flowering English climbing rose with fragrant, soft-pink, semi-double flowers. Ideal for walls or large, robust obelisks. Very few thorns. 3.5m x 2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

6 ***Rosa*** **Buttercup (= 'Ausband')** One of the most deliciously fragrant of all roses. The flowers are a rich yellow and loosely cupped. It repeat flowers well. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

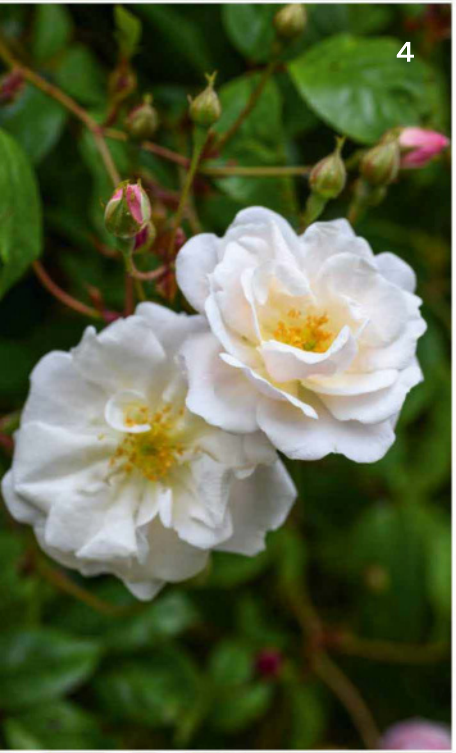
7 ***Rosa*** **Queen of Sweden (= 'Austiger')** A particularly upright English shrub rose with very neat, light pink, cup-shaped blooms. Good as a cut flower. Light myrrh fragrance. 1.25m x 75cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

8 ***Rosa*** **'Rambling Rector'** A vigorous rambler with large heads of white, semi double, strongly fragrant flowers followed by small orange hips. 7m x 7m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

9 ***Rosa*** **Princess Anne (= 'Auskitchen')** A fragrant English shrub rose, with deep-pink flowers that fade to a rich pink. 1.2m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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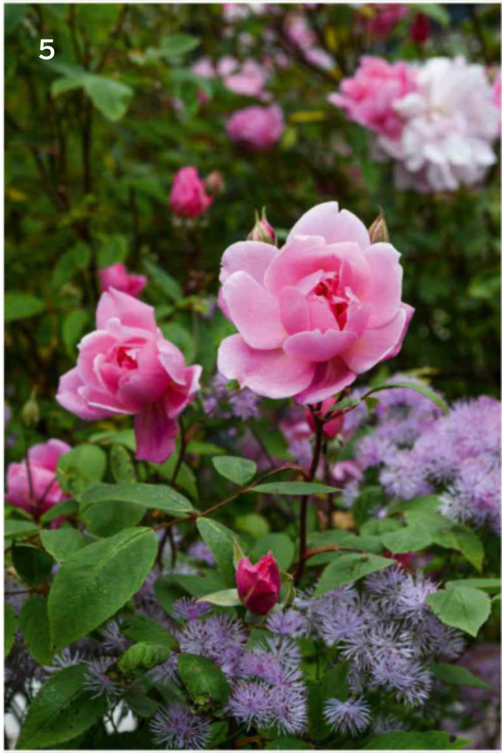
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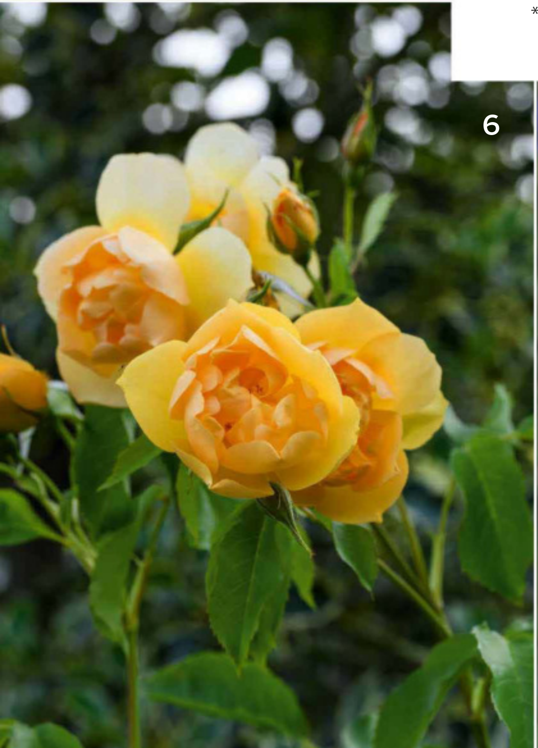
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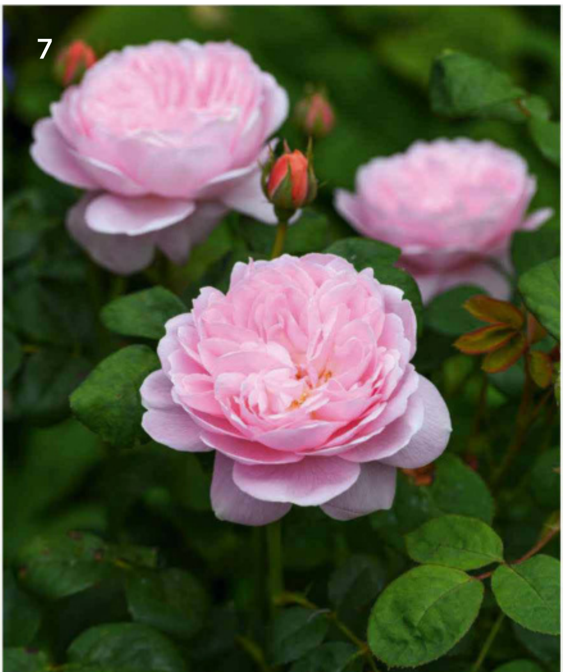
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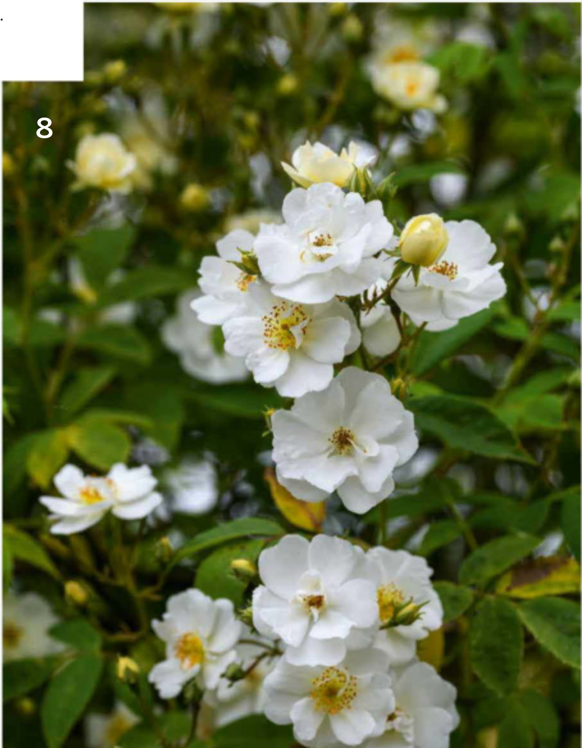
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Myth-busting rose tips from Michael Marriott

Roses can grow in shade. Although most prefer a sunny position, some do very well in part or almost full shade. They might not have as many flowers, but they will grow well.

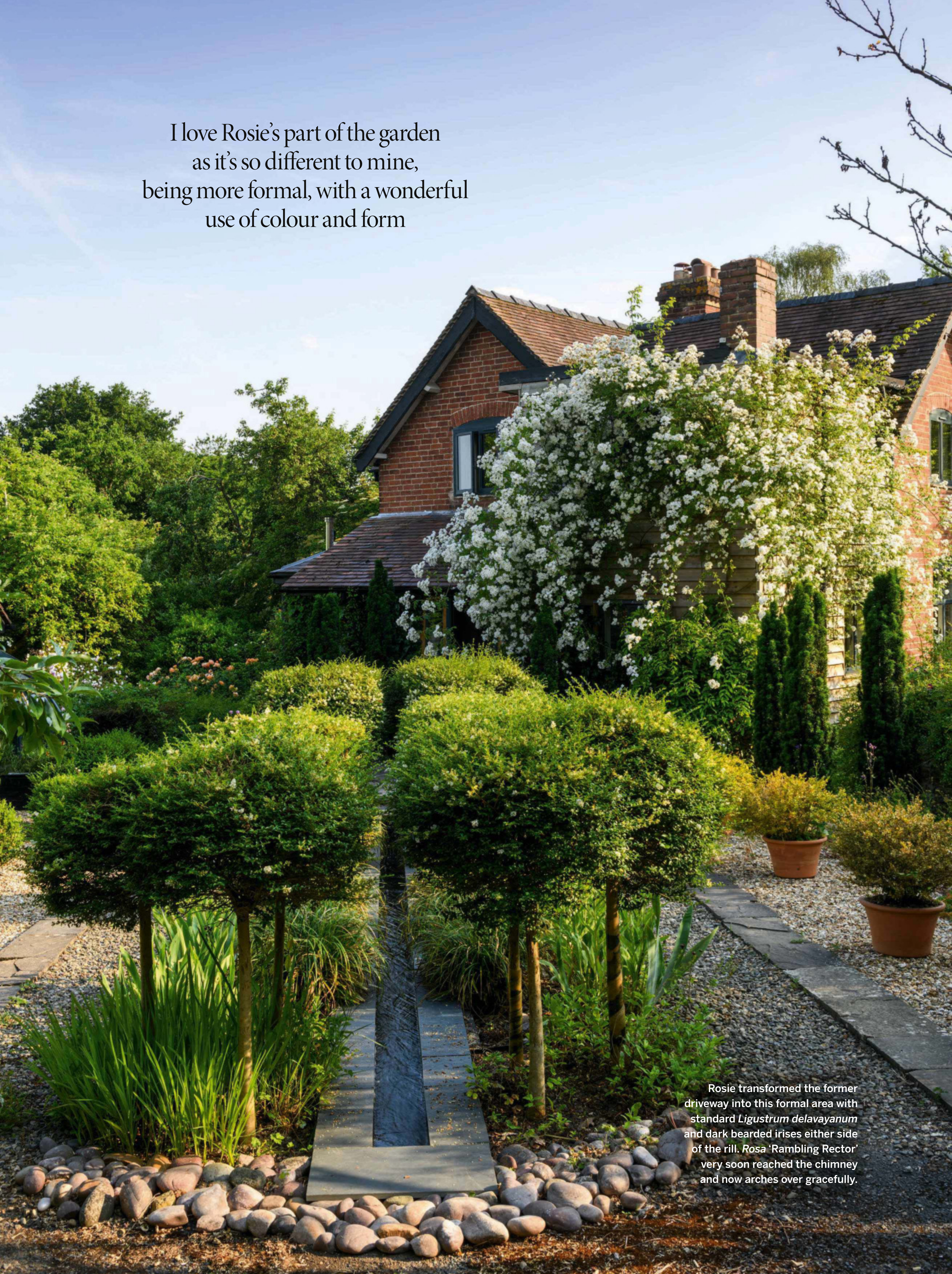
Don't worry about replant disease. If you plan to plant where there has been a rose before, you may be concerned about replant disease. But as long as you've looked after your soil well with generous mulching and not overfed the rose in the past, you should be absolutely fine planting it in the same place.

Don't worry about deadheading. I tend to choose roses that offer flowers that die well. Some drop off and others remain attractive as the flowers fade. Deadheading will encourage a second set of flowers on some roses, but I rarely deadhead. When a rose offers hips after flowering, deadheading should be avoided. I would suggest you experiment with leaving a few parts of the rose to see if hips appear.

Consider only feeding potted plants. In my Shropshire garden, I feed very little as the soil is fertile. Plants can suffer if they are overfed, so always follow the instructions on the feed packet. Roses in pots will need feeding as most peat-free composts only have enough food to keep the rose going for up to six weeks. Also make sure to water really thoroughly so the compost doesn't dry out.

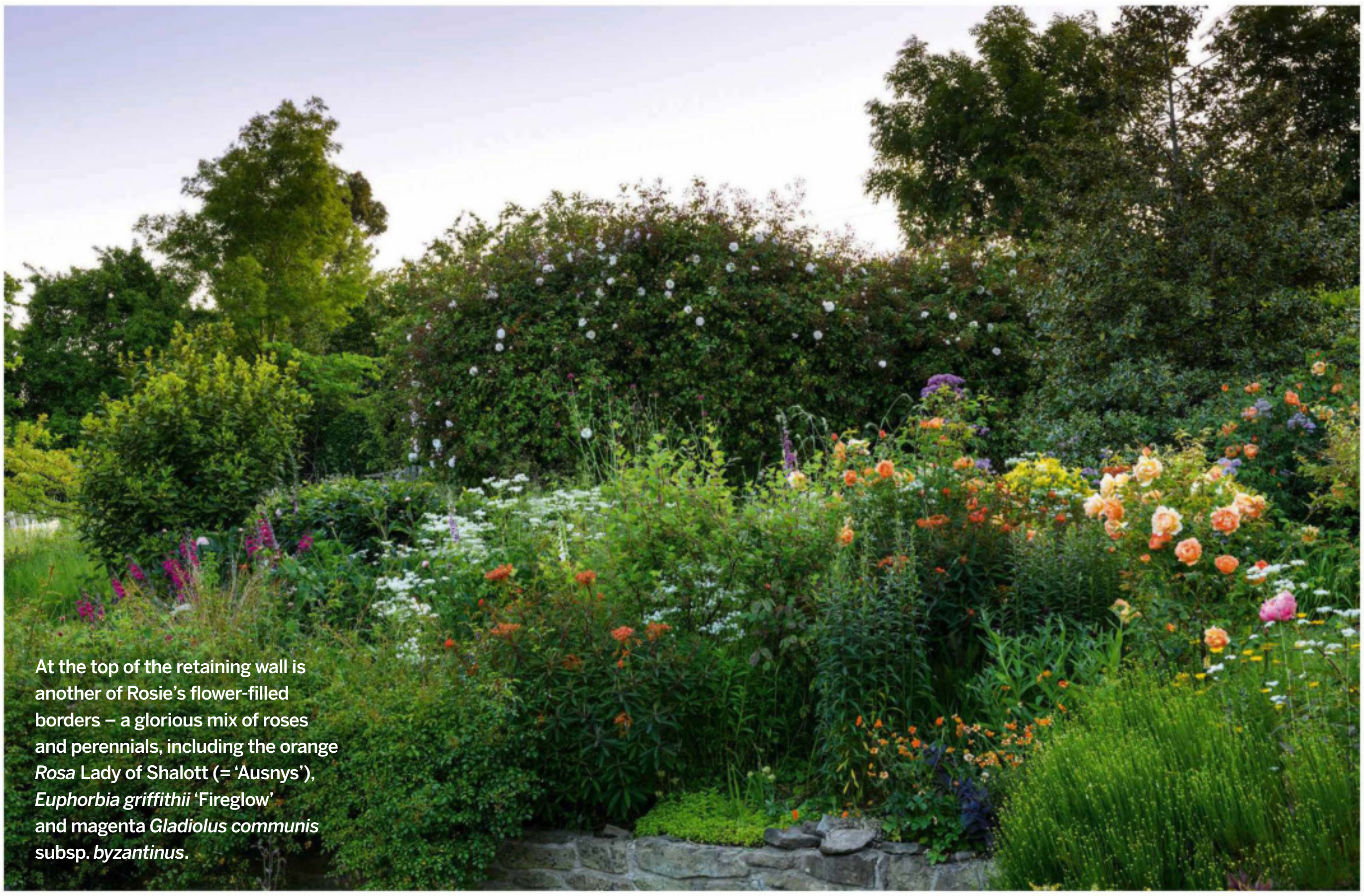
There is a simple way to mix roses with perennials. Pick a flower and offer it up to the rose. Look to see how the flower colours work together.

Don't do anything if a pest or disease affects your roses. In 40 years of growing roses, I have never used a spray. The more aphids you have, the better, as they provide food for visiting birds and beneficial insects and you end up with a balanced environment. If I have a rose that consistently struggles with disease, I remove it and plant a more resistant variety. Rose nurseries are gradually removing the more diseased varieties and keeping the healthier ones.



I love Rosie's part of the garden as it's so different to mine, being more formal, with a wonderful use of colour and form

Rosie transformed the former driveway into this formal area with standard *Ligustrum delavayanum* and dark bearded irises either side of the rill. *Rosa* 'Rambling Rector' very soon reached the chimney and now arches over gracefully.



At the top of the retaining wall is another of Rosie's flower-filled borders – a glorious mix of roses and perennials, including the orange *Rosa* Lady of Shalott (= 'Ausnys'), *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Fireglow' and magenta *Gladiolus communis* subsp. *byzantinus*.

▷ sloping site. This is Michael's domain. Camassias, *Tulipa sprengeri*, ox-eye daisies and spotted orchids surround a simple recliner made from pallets. "We are big recyclers and are always on the hunt for bargains. We'll head to the reject area of a nursery to see if we can nurse something back to health." This is one of Michael's favourite places to sit and soak in the views.

There used to be a driveway right down to the house, but neither of them wanted to see cars when they looked out the window, so what was the drive is now a rill edged with standard balls of ligustrum. "This is one of Rosie's areas," explains Michael.

Originally the house was one half of a semi-detached property but a few years ago they bought the other half with its garden. "That garden hadn't been touched for 30 years and we were determined to keep the magic of the ivy tumbling from the trees and the romance of the journey through an abandoned plot," says Michael. "We have removed a lot of brambles and weeds that were strangling plants but have carefully edited it to keep the feeling of adventure."

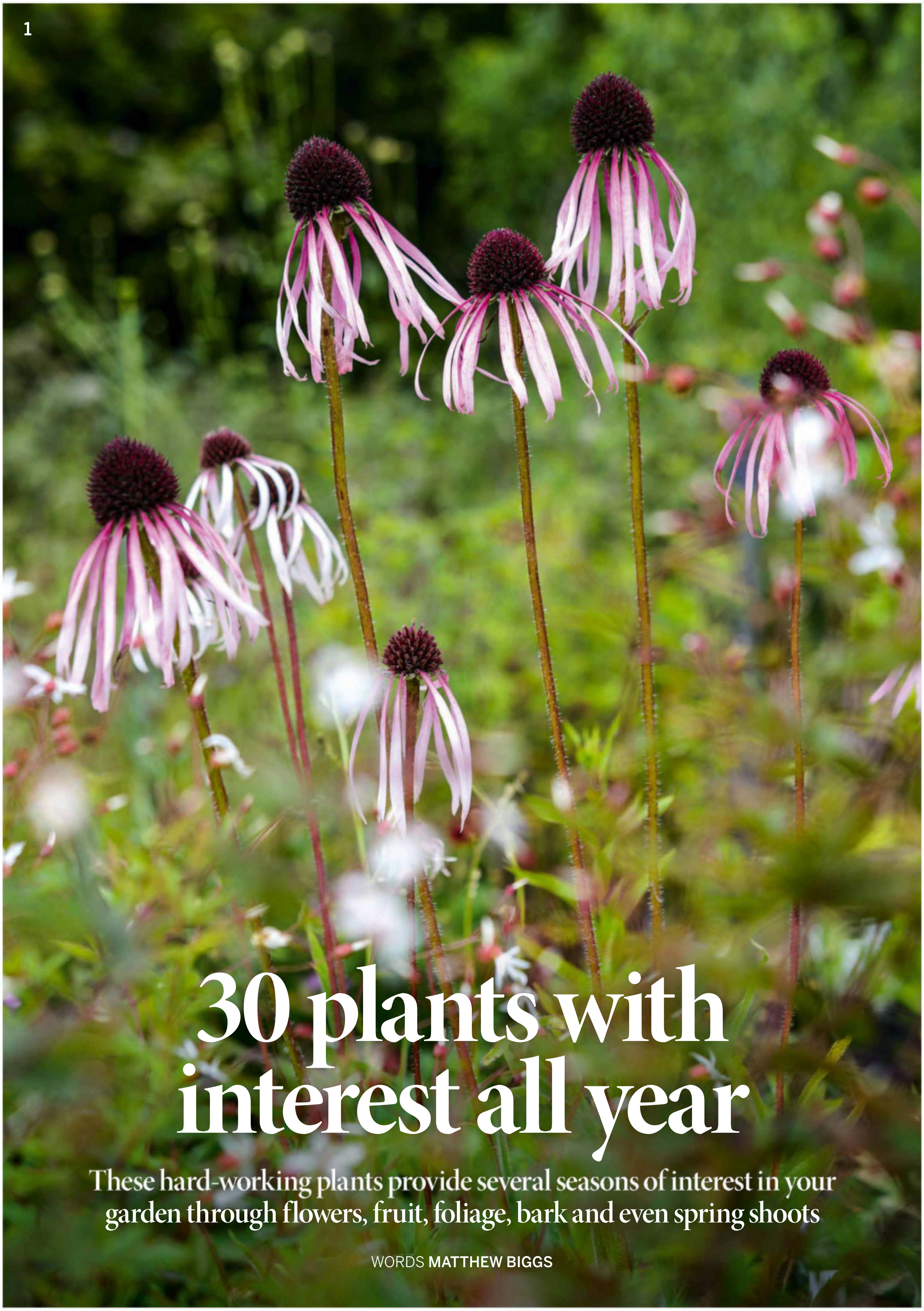
The garden also doubles up as a halfway house for plants destined for the TV spotlight. "I buy plants with my eyes," says Rosie. "I am so used to buying plants that look instantly good for TV, I often buy in flower. I check the fine details such as the bee guides on the inside of petals as they can be so bright that they can clash with my planned colour scheme." She admits she used to cut the flowers off *Rosa* Lady Emma Hamilton (= 'Ausbrother') because it was planted in the wrong spot and clashed with the roses around it, but once moved, colour harmony was restored. "For me, colour is very important. I will dig out some of Michael's self-seeded dandelions – not because I'm waging war on them, but because they clash with other strong colours in my borders. Occasionally, some of his weeds visit my plantings." Michael's garden is, she says: "Too messy, and needs more plants. But I love the fact he encourages ant hills in his meadow."

On paper you wouldn't think that the couple's gardening styles would work together, but they do. Their garden has a real sense of freedom – although they both say that they wouldn't touch the other's side except under close supervision.

Although Rosie's areas are more designed, which isn't Michael's style, they share the view that they should garden organically, and break the rules. "We have an old Bramley apple tree in the garden and Rosie wanted to plant the rose Kew Gardens under it," says Michael. "I said it would fail, but it has thrived. Although roses prefer full sun, she has proved that anything is worth a try." ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Michael Marriott's work at **michaelmarriottrosarian.org**

When I first gardened alongside Michael, I would say things like 'Oh dearest, wouldn't that look better further down?' He would never reply, just smile



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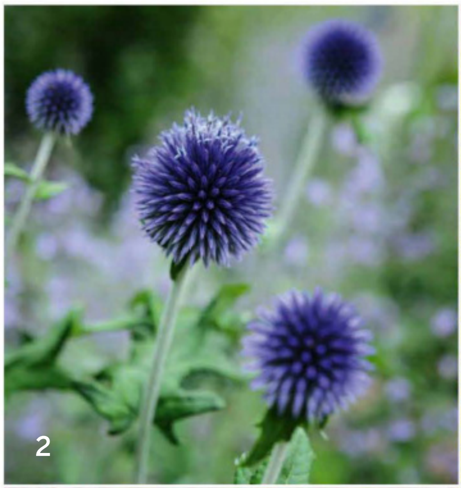
30 plants with interest all year

These hard-working plants provide several seasons of interest in your garden through flowers, fruit, foliage, bark and even spring shoots

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS**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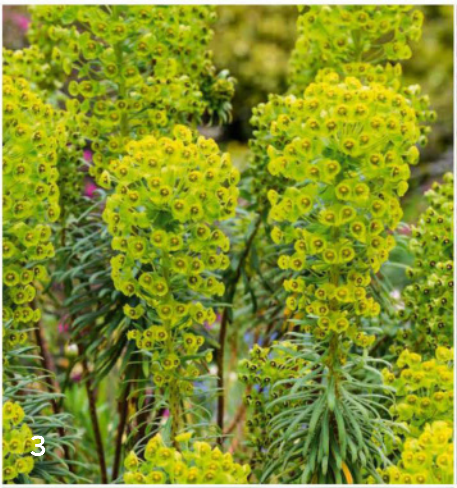
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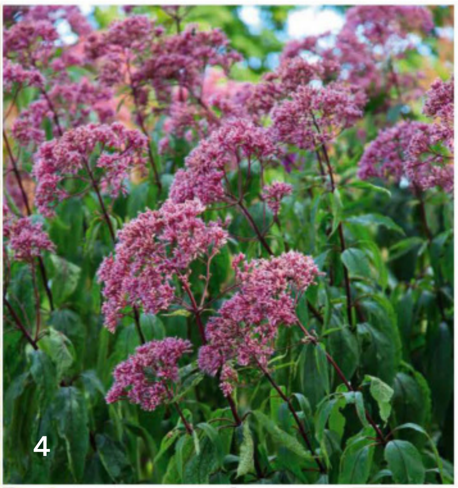
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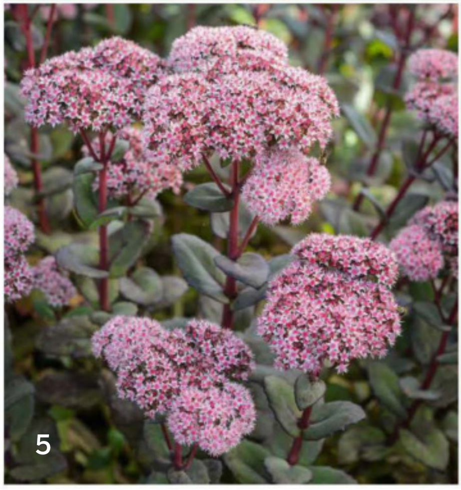
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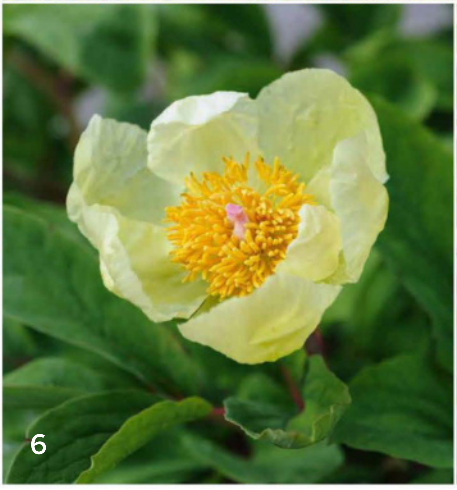
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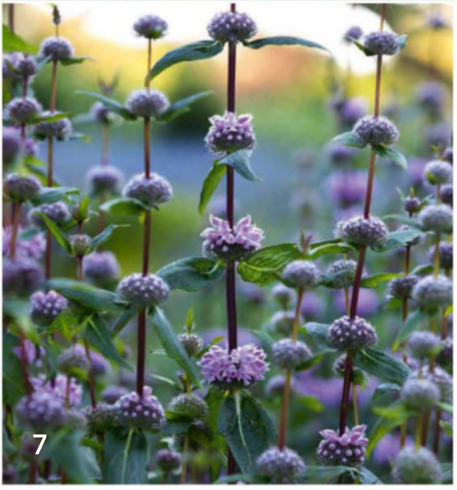
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Perennials

1 *ECHINACEA PALLIDA* This exquisite native of the North American prairies, the most dainty of blooms, displays its balletic elegance with slender, pale-pink ray florets that are held horizontally, then gradually droop groundward and flutter in the breeze. The orange-brown central cone remains through winter, topping the bronze stems. Despite its appearance, it is hardy and attractive to bees and butterflies and is outstanding when planted in a troupe with other prairie-style plants. Full sun and moist, well-drained soil create ideal growing conditions. Cut the stems back to ground level in late winter. Height and spread: 1.25m x 50cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-10b†.

2 *ECHINOPS RITRO* 'VEITCH'S BLUE' Spiny, deeply cut leaves, which are dark green on top and white below, provide interest from spring until the blooms of this globe thistle appear in late summer, when the spherical heads of buds topping the metallic stems gradually open to dark-blue flowers. At its most impressive in large groups, this is an excellent plant for cutting and drying for flower arrangements, but should be cut before the flowers open. Cut back the stems for a second flush of flowers, or leave the flowerheads for their architectural value. They thrive in an open sunny spot on poor soil, but tolerate anything but deep shade; add grit to heavier soils before planting. The flowers are irresistible to bees, butterflies and other insects during the day, and moths at night. In ideal conditions, they self-seed freely. 90cm x 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *EUPHORBIA CHARACIAS* SUBSP. *WULFENII* This understandably popular, evergreen euphorbia has the otherworldly appearance of many of its fellows, particularly when in flower. The upright stems, clothed with whorls of fleshy, glaucous leaves, are topped with huge heads of chartreuse-green flowers with bronze 'eyes' in spring. The great Gertrude Jekyll described this sun-loving, evergreen shrub as 'one of the grandest of plants'; it needs no greater endorsement. Architectural in appearance and drought tolerant, it is a mainstay of the herbaceous border, contemporary minimalist plantings and gravel gardens. It may self-seed, but plants rarely come true, so should be removed. It flowers on the previous year's shoots, so remove flowering shoots at the base at the end of winter. Avoid contact with the sap: wear gloves, long-sleeved garments and eye protection when working with it. 1.2m x 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

4 *EUTROCHIUM MACULATUM* 'PURPLE BUSH' A selection of Joe pye weed raised by Piet Oudolf. It produces fluffy, dusky-pink flowers over a long period through summer and into autumn, then retains its structure and architectural beauty throughout winter, the flowers bleaching to soft brown. Ideal for any moist soil in full sun or part shade, and attractive to insects. Its lance-shaped leaves are a deep, dark green, with serrated margins. The purple stems are strong and sturdy, so there's no need for staking. More vigorous cultivars can be grown in drier conditions to restrict their growth. 1.5m x 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

5 *HYLOTELEPHIUM* 'MATRONA' The plant formally known as sedum is a sturdy, succulent, architectural herbaceous perennial with purple stems, the thick olive-green leaves also becoming purple towards the end of the season. In late summer, flat-topped clusters of soft-pink flowers are a magnet for bees and other pollinators. Its stems and seedheads remain attractive throughout the winter, particularly when frosted, and should be cut back to the base before new growth emerges in spring. Invaluable for the front of a sunny border, in dry gardens and also as a cut flower. 75cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b. ▷

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

1, 2, 3, 5 & 6 JASON INGRAM; 4 ANNAICK GUITTENY; 7 RICHARD BLOOM.

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▷ **6 *PAEONIA DAURICA* SUBSP. *MLOKOSEWITSCHII*** This herbaceous beauty from the Central Caucasus is exceptional in every way. In early spring, the leaves emerge a rich pinkish-bronze, later turning soft grey-green above, creating the ideal foil for the buds. These open to form perfect bowls of cool lemon-yellow, with a central boss of golden stamens, in late spring. In late summer, coral-coloured seedpods open to reveal blue seed, and in autumn the foliage turns orange-brown. Such an aristocratic plant needs full sun or part shade and deep, fertile, humus-rich, slightly alkaline soil; but neutral to slightly acidic soils are suitable too. Thorough ground preparation and correct siting will be repaid a thousandfold.
80cm x 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

7 *PHLOMOIDES TUBEROSA* 'AMAZONE' A striking plant that was selected by the legendary plant breeder Ernst Pagels. From a base of handsome, large, dark-green, deeply veined, arrow-shaped leaves with sharply serrated edges come dark-purple, branching stems, carrying whorls of soft-lilac tubular flowers at intervals from midsummer. The flowers look wonderful among late-flowering perennials and grasses, and remain attractive as dramatic, dark, frosted seedheads over winter. It can be slow to establish but is well worth the wait. Plant in an open sunny spot where the soil is not excessively wet.
1.2m x 90cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

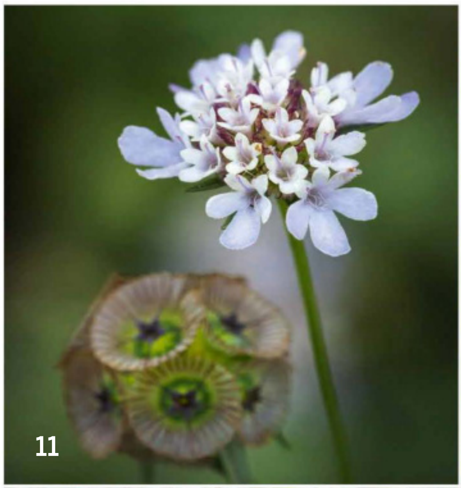
8 *THALICTRUM* 'ELIN' Attractive, dark foliage emerges in early spring, with leaves up to 45cm long, made of three- to five-lobed leaflets that gradually turn to grey-green – an attractive contrast to the purple stems. A haze of dusky, pale-lilac flowers with prominent creamy-yellow stamens top the tall stems in late spring and are a magnet for bees. It enjoys an open sunny position or part shade, where it may need staking, and prefers moist, well-drained soil. Autumn colour is bright yellow and although the plant is then fragile, it can become a winter feature, the tall stems turning a tawny colour, topped by the remains of the delicate umbels of flowers.
2.5m x 50cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

9 *VERATRUM ALBUM* Rarely planted, this unusual hardy shade lover has a dramatic impact as its conspicuously pleated, bright-green leaves emerge from the soil, then develop in a similar shape and style to hostas up the base of the stem. This early burst of flamboyance is followed by white to green-tinted, star-shaped flowers, produced on imposing, branched, candelabra-like stems in midsummer. It is the true definition of a statement plant. The only downside is its toxicity, if accidentally ingested. Some people are allergic to its sap too – so a naturalised woodland area or meadow is ideal. Slugs and snails also take an unwelcome interest. Take the necessary precautions, and be assured, it is well worth the effort. The flowers are followed by fruits, but can be cut back so energy is used to bulk up the parent plant. 2m x 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.

Annuals and biennials

10 *LUNARIA ANNUA* 'CHEDGLOW' A highly desirable selection of honesty, with toothed and heart-shaped young leaves that vary from purple to green and are spotted with purple, eventually becoming dark purple. It has pinkish-purple flowers in late spring to early summer, then flat, rounded seedpods, which hold the dry seeds. These translucent, silvery-white seedpods can be cut for dried floral arrangements, or left in the garden. It flourishes in fertile, moist, well-drained soil in sun or light shade and combines well with pale-yellow or blue, so allow it to self-seed among *Paeonia daurica* subsp. *mlokosewitschii* or *Camassia*

8 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 9 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS;
10, 12, 13, 14 & 15 JASON INGRAM; 12 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS.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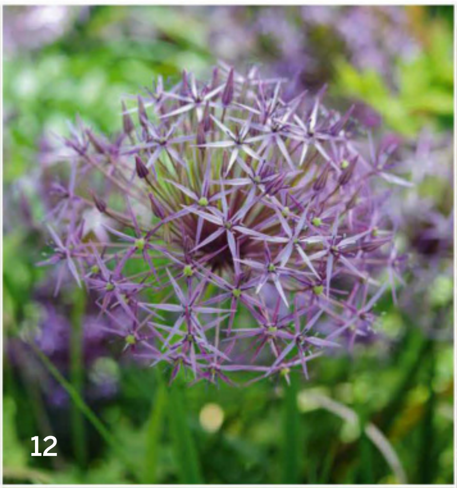
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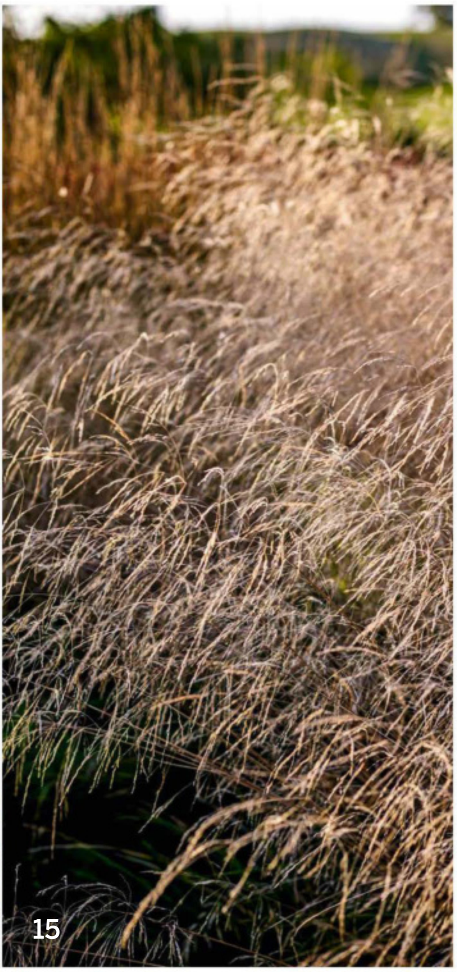
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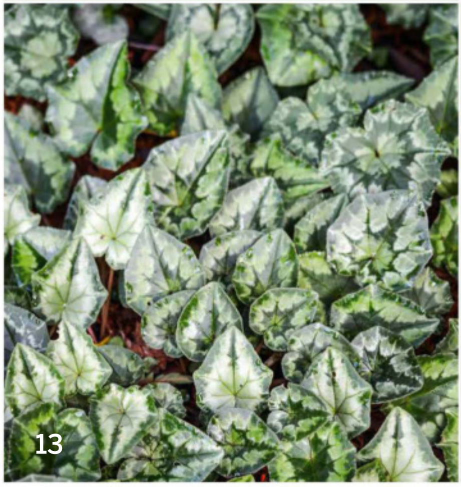
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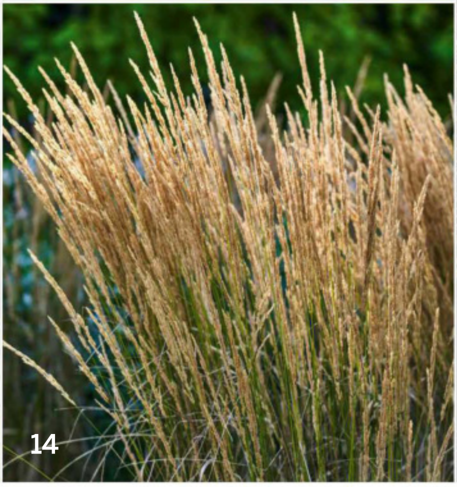
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leichtlinii. Sown in early summer to flower the following spring, it becomes a large, well-branched plant. It can also be sown in early spring as an annual – but the floral display will be smaller and the seedheads more compact. An excellent plant for pollinators with nectar-rich flowers. 1m x 30cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

11 *SCABIOSA STELLATA* This small, pretty annual, with lance-shaped or lobed leaves, produces small, white flowerheads beloved by pollinators. They are followed in late summer by spherical, papery, translucent, silvery heads of bracts, like clusters of individual 'cupcake' cases. A chocolate star sits at the centre of each one, with radiating fine lines throughout the papery bracts. A little hairspray after drying makes them less fragile. Grow in well-drained soil in sun to part shade. 50cm x 50cm. RHS H4.

Bulbs

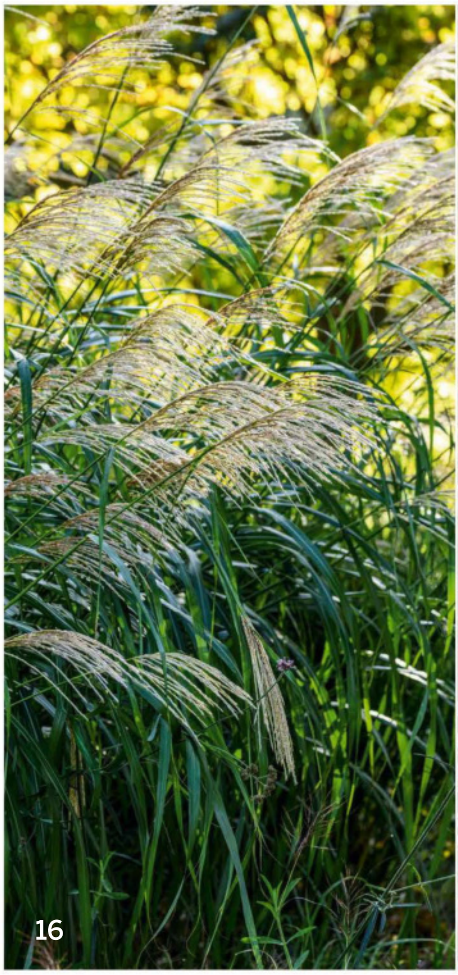
12 *ALLIUM CRISTOPHII* This allium bears huge, spherical flowerheads in summer, up to 20cm in diameter, containing up to 80 purple, metallic, star-like flowers and is beloved by pollinators. The flowers fade to resemble parchment starbursts, which last in the border and can be cut as dried flowers or left as punctuation. It can be grown in a cutting garden, and works well in sunny borders, among herbaceous plants or in drifts with ornamental grasses; all hide the tatty leaves after flowering. It needs a sunny location in fertile, well-drained soil. In colder regions it should be protected with a mulch or grown in pots and overwintered in a frost-free place. It not only self-seeds freely but is also deer and rabbit resistant. 60cm x 20cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

13 *CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM* This pretty yet hardy plant is perfect for growing at the base of trees or shrubs and naturalising in short grass, where the massed flowers then foliage, create a pleasing display. The dainty flowers have reflexed petals in shades of pink, which appear in autumn and are followed by masses of dark-green, overlapping leaves marked and marbled in silver. They create a display through winter until spring when the leaves gradually die back and the plant becomes dormant. Bronze rounded fruits form at the end of coiled-spring-like stems and are dispersed by ants. It also self-seeds freely. It thrives in humus-rich soil in part shade, but also in open positions in poorer soils that are moist in winter. 10cm x 15cm. RHS H5 USDA 5a-9b.

Grasses

14 *CALAMAGROSTIS* X *ACUTIFLORA* 'KARL FOERSTER' One of the most beautiful grasses, is valued for its stiff, upright habit. The flower stems emerge from mounds of green foliage in moist soil. They bleach in summer, become golden in winter, and are particularly attractive when covered in frost. They also last well into the new year. This deciduous grass should be cut back to just above ground level in late February to early March to avoid damaging new growth. Needs moist but well-drained soil. 1.8m x 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

15 *DESCHAMPSIA CESPITOSA* 'GOLDTAU' A versatile, mound-forming evergreen grass, perfect for sun and light shade, and moist soils. The silvery to reddish-brown flower spikes appear above clumps of evergreen foliage from early to late summer, then fade to a soft golden-yellow that shimmers like a cloud in the sunlight. It can be planted among perennials, in groups in sun or shade, or even in a rock garden, and self-seed freely. Relatively short lived, it can be divided every two to three years. Cut back old stems in spring before new growth appears. 75cm x 75cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b. ▷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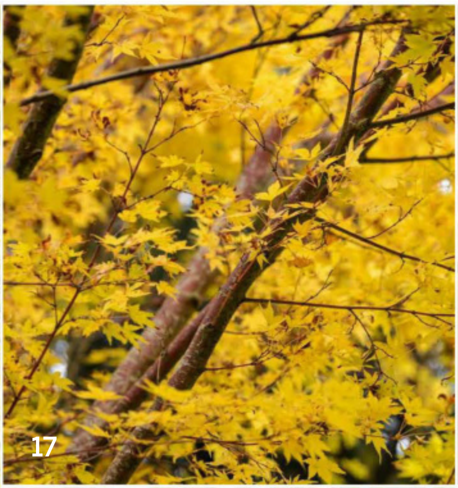
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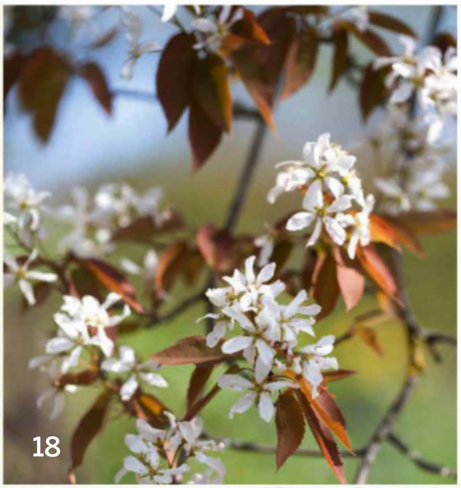
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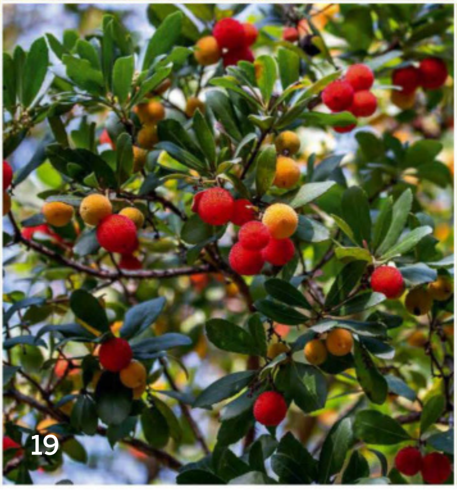
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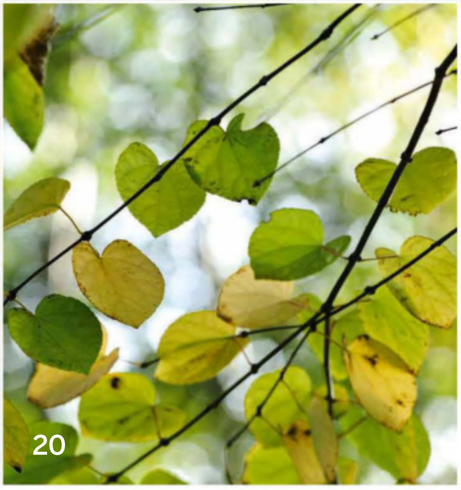
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▷ **16 *MISCANTHUS SINENSIS* 'SILBERFEDER'** In late summer, tall, upright stems of narrow, shimmering, silvery-white to buff-pink, feather-like plumes burst from mounds of dark-green foliage with a silver midrib. Best in an open, sunny location, in well-drained, moist soil but tolerates all but waterlogged soils and part shade. It can be enjoyed in massed planting alongside *Helianthus*, *Coreopsis* or *Echinacea*, as screening, specimen groups; and in large containers. 2m x 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

Trees

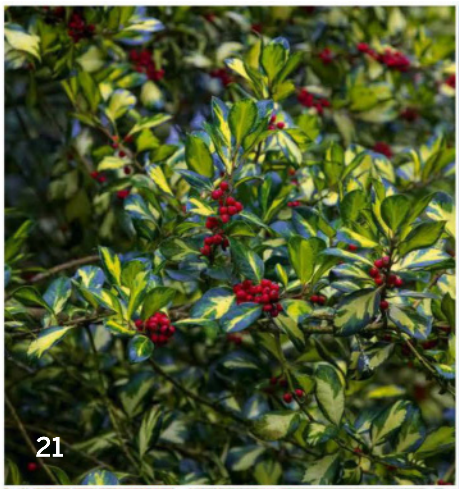
17 *ACER PALMATUM* 'SANGO-KAKU' The coral bark maple, which can be grown as a shrub or very small tree, is ideal for smaller spaces like courtyards, or for containers. It boasts bright-red young winter stems followed by golden-green leaves in summer, which turn dramatic shades of apricot-yellow in autumn, before falling. Position in sun or dappled shade, or as a specimen tree anywhere that the coloured stems catch the winter sunshine. Needs well-drained, fertile soil and shelter from strong winds. Autumn colour is more dramatic on acidic soil. 6m x 5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

18 *AMELANCHIER* X *GRANDIFLORA* 'BALLERINA' A widely recommended small tree suited for gardens with limited space. It's remarkably floriferous, with the clusters of white flowers packed together at the tips of the previous year's growth in spring. Rich bronze shoots emerge at the same time, turning cool green through the summer and transforming into a bonfire of bright red, orange and gold in autumn before leaf fall. Outstanding as a specimen tree or used as part of a mixed border in full sun or dappled shade. Although happy in most fertile soils, autumn colour is best on acidic soils. The bright-red fruits, ripen from midsummer, and turn dark purple when ripe. Withstands pollution and tolerates poor soils and damp sites. 6m x 3m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

19 *ARBUTUS UNEDO* This fascinating large evergreen shrub or small, often multi-stemmed tree, known as the strawberry tree, is unique in that it is a native to the Mediterranean and Ireland. Also unusual is that the bright-red, strawberry-like fruits (edible, though not hugely desirable) ripen in autumn at the same time as the white or pale-pink, pitcher-like flowers appear. The flowers are popular with insects and the fruit can take up to a year to ripen. Another outstanding feature is the peeling mahogany-coloured bark, a wonderful feature when grown as a 'standard'. Best planted in a sheltered position in full sun or dappled shade, protected from cold winter winds or in an urban environment, due to its tolerance of atmospheric pollution. It will tolerate chalk but prefers slightly acidic conditions. 8m x 8m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

20 *CERCIDIPHYLLUM JAPONICUM* A most elegant tree with many virtues. The flowers, appear before the foliage to create a reddish aura, and are followed early in the year by smoky-pink, delicate, beautifully heart-shaped, pendent leaves, with red petioles that cloak the tree in green through the summer. Autumn colour varies from tree to tree and may be orange, yellow, purple or red. It is notable in that the leaves give off an aroma of burnt vanilla or candy floss as they decay, and it is not unusual to smell their glorious fragrance before seeing the tree. Best in a sheltered spot, where the early growth is protected from frost, and although it tolerates some alkalinity, it produces better autumn colour on lime-free or acid soils with a constant supply of moisture. Leaves can fall in drought but will return following rain or irrigation. 'Glowball' and 'Boyd's Dwarf' are compact cultivars for smaller spaces. 10m x 4m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

16, 17, 20 & 23 JASON INGRAM; 18 DORLING KINDERSLEY LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 19 BIOSPHOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 21 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS; 22 GARFOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



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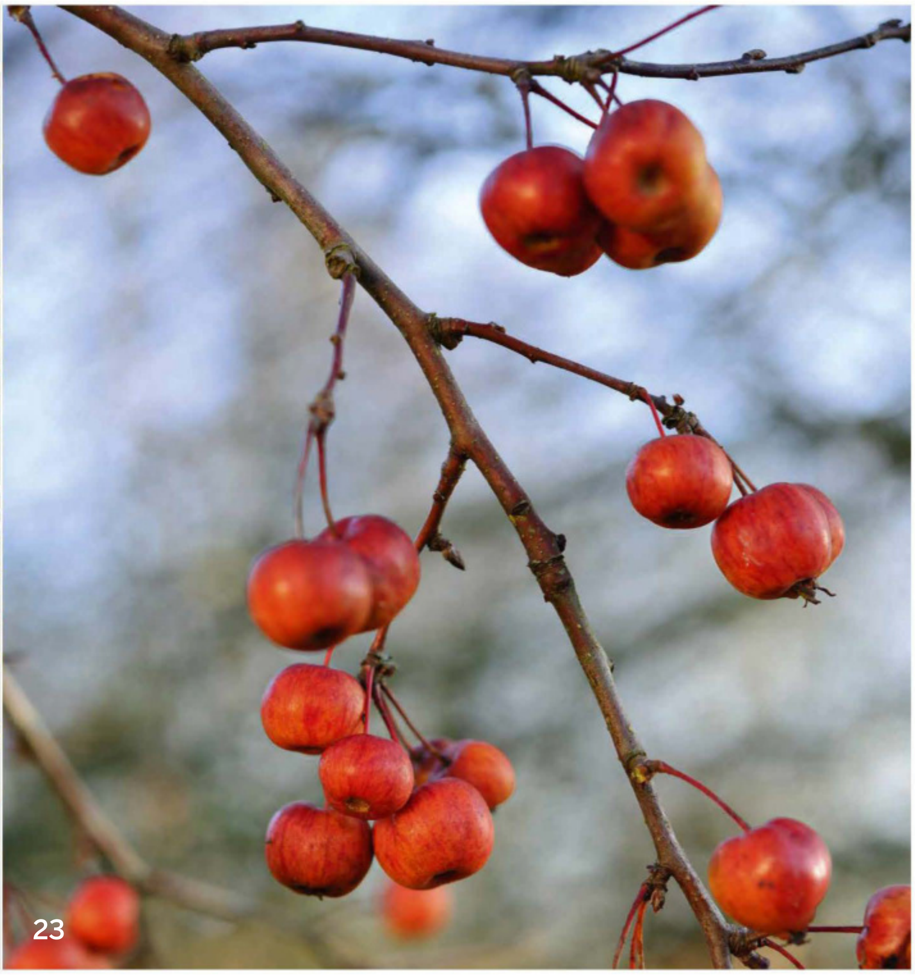

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21 *ILEX* X *ALTACLERENSIS* 'LAWSONIANA' This long-established holly cultivar, raised in Edinburgh around 1869, is prized for its colourful year-round foliage. The dark-green leaves are splashed with irregular, bright golden-yellow and lighter green variegation, with clusters of vivid-red berries in autumn and early winter. Makes a fine shrub, very small tree or even an unusual hedge. Thrives in sun or will brighten part shade on any fertile soil. It needs a male holly nearby to fruit reliably. Any reversion back to plain green leaves should be removed before the wood hardens. 2.4m x 5m. AGM. RHS H6.

22 *KOELREUTERIA PANICULATA* 'CORAL SUN' This flamboyant small tree, with a narrow, upright habit, really earns its place in the garden. In spring the young shoots and leaves turn from red-pink to orange, maturing to become green and fern-like in summer, the red leaf stalks remaining until autumn. Clusters of bright, golden-yellow flowers in summer are followed by papery seedpods, backed by autumn colour of rich burnt-yellow and orange. It can be grown as a single stem or multi-stemmed for optimum impact. Of slow to moderate growth, it is happiest in a sunny, sheltered position; in cooler areas it is less vigorous. 4m x 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

23 *MALUS* 'EVERESTE' A handsome, easy to grow small crab apple, with a dense rounded crown that becomes a cloud of pale-pink and white flowers in spring. They are followed in autumn by clusters of edible, yellow and red, long-lasting fruit, which make excellent crab apple jelly. Established trees also have excellent autumn colour, the leaves turning glowing shades of orange and yellow before falling. Ideal in sun or part shade in fertile soil, it can be pruned to shape in late winter or early spring, though some flowers and fruit will be lost. It is self-pollinating, so fruit is produced with a single tree, and it is also an excellent pollinator for apple orchards. 7m x 6m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

24 *PINUS BUNGEANA* The elegant lacebark pine should be more widely planted and can be trained to become a large single or multi-stemmed tree, as it has the habit of branching from the base. Its outstanding feature is the beautifully marbled bark, which flakes away from the trunk like a plane tree, creating a mosaic of white, green, grey-green and brown, and becomes white when exposed to high levels of sunlight. The bark looks spectacular when wet with rain. Hardy but slow growing, particularly during its early years, and preferring full sun and fertile soil, it is not a plant for those seeking instant results but should be planted in a prominent location and regarded as a long-term investment for yourself and others, way into the future. 9m x 6m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

25 *PRUNUS* 'HORINJI' The name refers to an ancient Buddhist temple in Kyoto and this cultivar is believed to be a wild selection of cherry tree gifted to the monks there. This small, vase-shaped, deciduous tree with stiffly ascending branches becomes more rounded with age, and bears long, narrow, green leaves that turn yellow before falling in autumn. The spring flowers are semi-double; mauve-pink in bud, opening to soft pink then white, contrasting perfectly with the purplish brown calyces and creating a pleasing two-tone effect. Autumn leaf colour is orange and purple. Needs well-drained soil in full sun to perform well, but tolerates most soils including chalk and clay. Avoid planting near house foundations, fine lawns or drains as it has a shallow, spreading root system. 6m x 6m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

26 *SORBUS SARGENTIANA* A medium-sized rowan tree with several outstanding features. Distinctive, large, crimson 'sticky buds', like those of a horse chestnut, are visible between leaf fall and bud burst, from late autumn to early spring. In spring, the ▷

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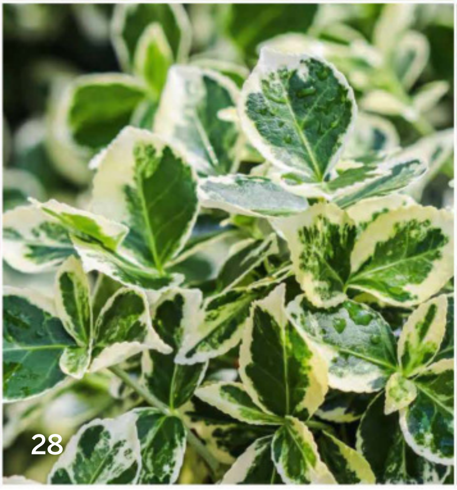
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▷ leaves emerge, up to 30cm long, comprising up to 11 slender mahogany-coloured leaflets, which then unfold to create a billowing texture of dark green before turning glorious shades of rich amber and red, rivalling any acer. Creamy-white flowers, which are popular with bees, appear in May and June and are followed by huge, dense clusters of orange-red berries in autumn and early winter, before being devoured by birds. Initially slow growing, it eventually becomes an excellent open-branched tree for smaller spaces, providing interest in all seasons. 4m x 3m. AGM. RHS H6.

Shrubs

27 *CORNUS ALBA* BATON ROUGE (= 'MINBAT') Dogwoods are renowned for the range of colour from their winter stems. This rather handsome, medium-sized deciduous shrub glows vivid crimson-red in winter but has the added bonus of clusters of white flowers in spring, attractive clusters of small, blue-black fruit in late summer and autumn, and leaves displaying purple, orange and red autumn tints before falling. Needs full sun or light shade on moisture-retentive soil. Plant in groups for the greatest impact. Cutting back the stems to within 30-40cm of the ground in early spring controls growth and maintains a supply of the vivid-red young stems. Feed with general fertiliser after pruning. 2.5m x 2.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

28 *EUONYMUS FORTUNEI* 'EMERALD GAIETY' This bushy, semi-evergreen shrub is an excellent dense, robust groundcover and ideal for low-maintenance gardens. With greater finesse than other selections, the small, lustrous, rounded, green leaves, each with a fine, irregular, silvery-white margin, become pink-tinged in the chill of winter. It thrives in any well-drained border in sun or part shade, and often adopts a climbing habit when planted against a wall. For those who appreciate the finer points of a plant, clusters of tiny green flowers may appear in May and June. Year-round colour provided by variegated or coloured-leaved evergreens such as this should be added with care, however, or the garden can become too busy. 1.2m x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA5a-8b.

29 *RHODODENDRON YAKUSHIMANUM* 'KOICHIRO WADA' An outstanding rhododendron that is ideal in containers of peat-free acidic compost or for smaller gardens. The architectural pink buds open to clusters of delightful apple-blossom flowers in May. A white fluffy covering on the upper surface of emerging and young leaves – a distinctive feature – is washed away by summer rain, exposing the lustrous, deep-green leaves beneath; the velvety covering on the lower surface then matures to rusty brown. This protective covering means that new growth is usually protected from aphids and fungal problems. Perfect for dappled shade and acidic soil. Water plants grown in containers with rainwater. 1.5m x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

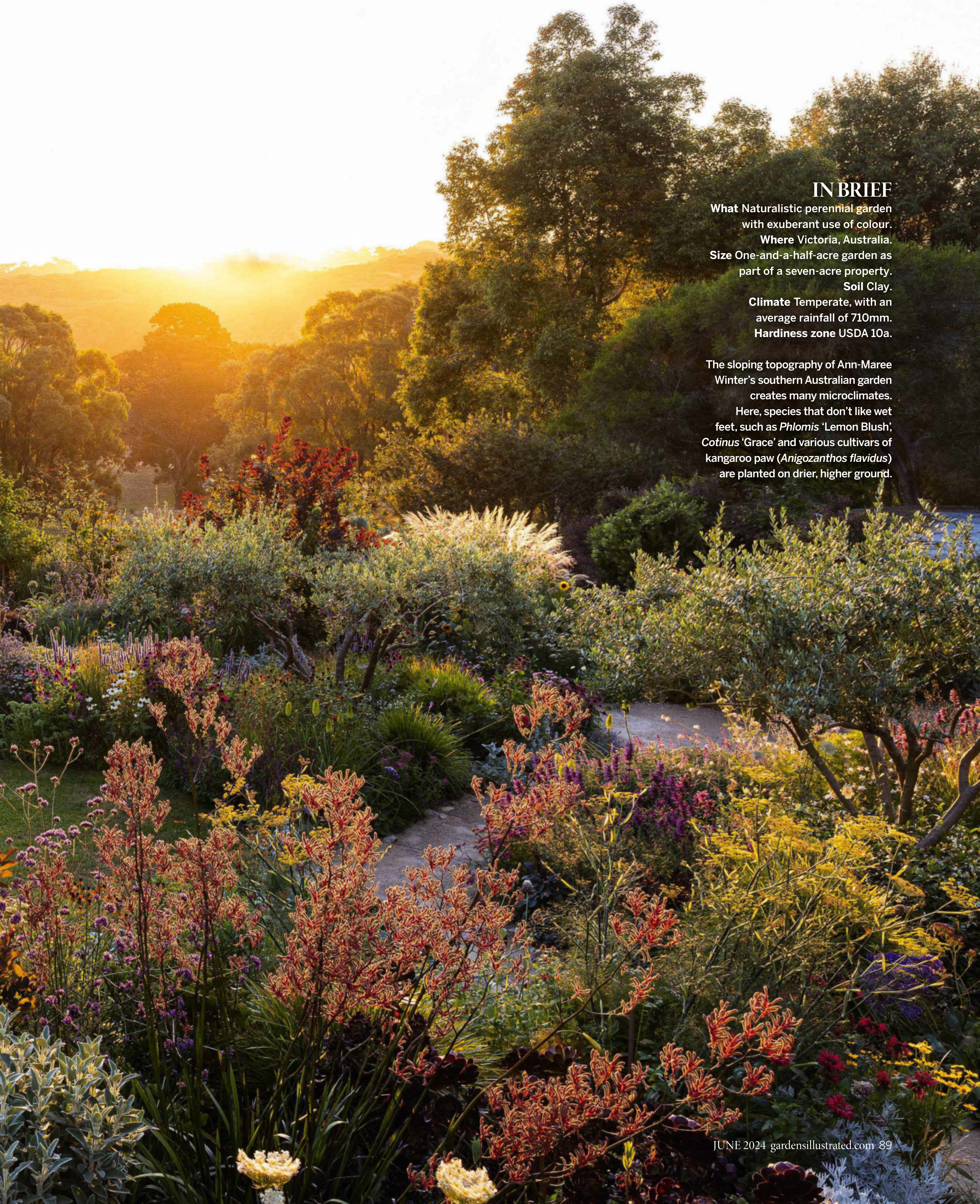
30 *ROSA* 'PENELOPE' This repeat-flowering, large, semi-double hybrid musk rose has been delighting gardeners since its introduction in 1924. The large clusters of well-spaced, attractive, creamy-pink flowers with slightly frilled edges have a fruity musk fragrance and are produced constantly from midsummer well into autumn. They are followed by masses of coral-coloured hips in autumn. Dark-green leaves and stems with plum-red shading ensure it associates well with bronze-foliaged plants. It's a versatile rose that thrives in full sun to part shade in borders, containers, as a hedge or even a small climber in fertile, humus-rich, moist, well-drained soil. 3m x 1.1m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b. ☐

24 RM FLORAL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 25 MARIUSZ JURGIELEWICZ / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 26 LEE AVISON / GAP PHOTOS; 27 DIANNA JAZWINSKI; 28 IMAGEBROKER.COM GMBH && CO. KG / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 29 NOVA PHOTO GRAPHIK / GAP PHOTOS; 30 JASON INGRAM.

Colour therapy

Ann-Maree Winter's joyful Australian garden became a place of solace and nurture in hard times

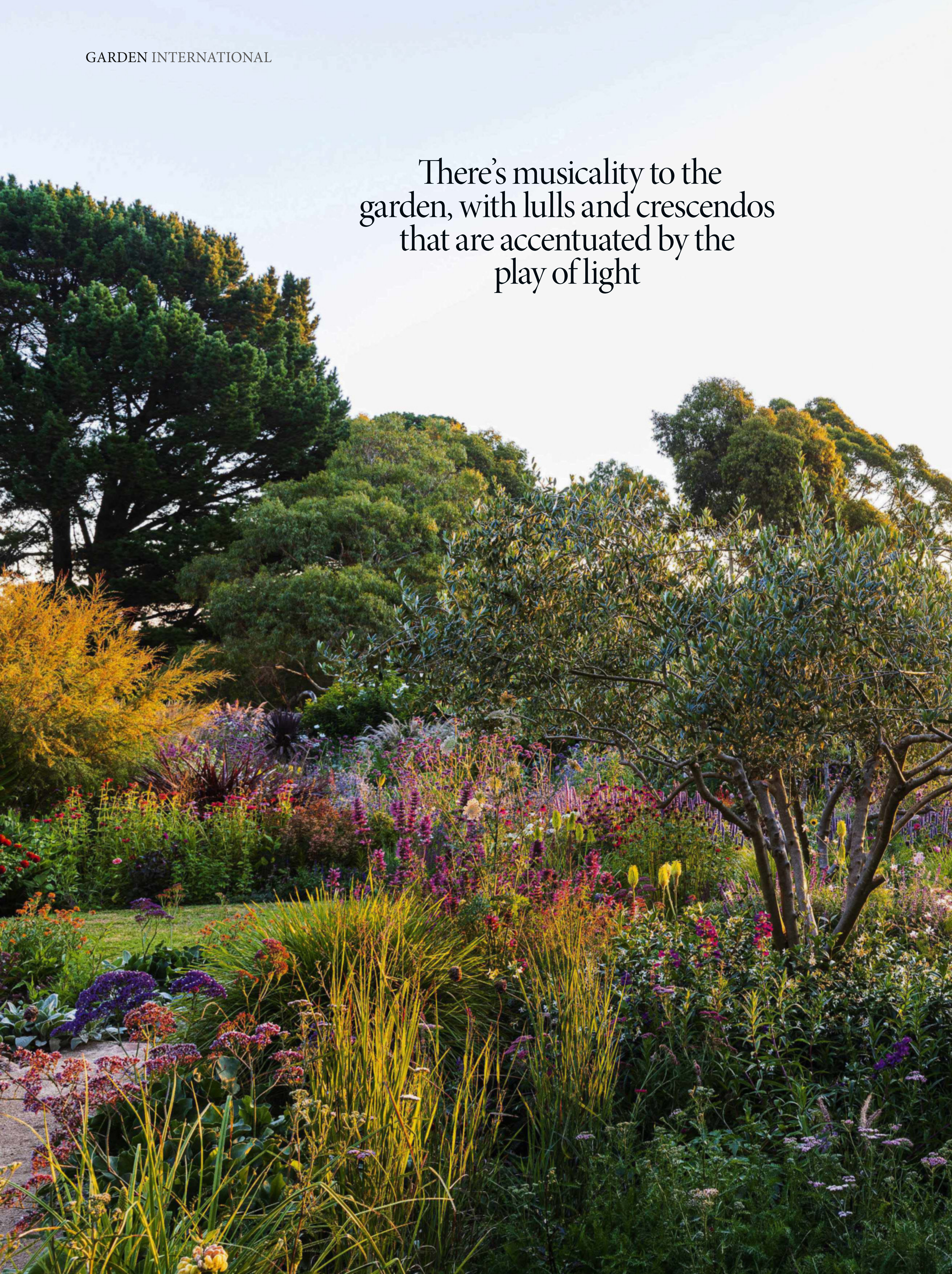
WORDS **GEORGINA REID** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**



IN BRIEF

What Naturalistic perennial garden with exuberant use of colour.
Where Victoria, Australia.
Size One-and-a-half-acre garden as part of a seven-acre property.
Soil Clay.
Climate Temperate, with an average rainfall of 710mm.
Hardiness zone USDA 10a.

The sloping topography of Ann-Maree Winter's southern Australian garden creates many microclimates. Here, species that don't like wet feet, such as *Phlomis* 'Lemon Blush', *Cotinus* 'Grace' and various cultivars of kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos flavidus*) are planted on drier, higher ground.



There's musicality to the garden, with lulls and crescendos that are accentuated by the play of light

Ann-Maree Winter knows better than most the transformative power of gardening. Her garden on the Mornington Peninsula in southern Australia is a place of solace, joy and plenty of colour. She and her husband Paul bought the property in 2015, moving from a 450 square metre suburban plot with sandy soil to seven windswept acres of rich volcanic soil. "I can stick my finger in the ground here, and it should grow," she says, with a chuckle.

When the couple first arrived, the garden was sparsely planted with native plants strangled by weed mat, gum trees planted along fence lines and not much else. Now, around one and a half of the seven acres are gardened. Entering the property from the front gates, visitors are greeted by lawn with a sculptural cluster of three eucalyptus trees, followed by the productive and picking garden.

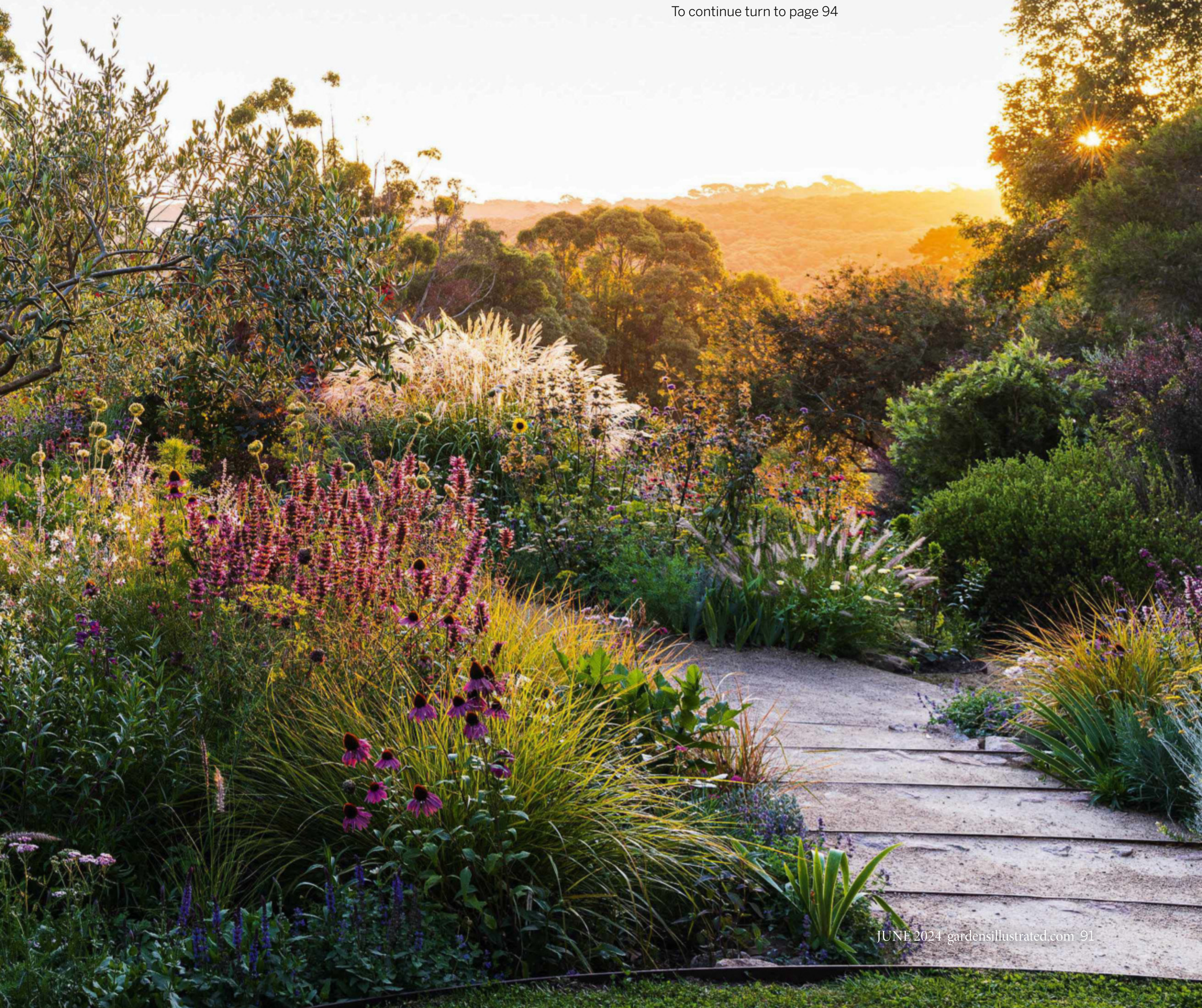
As the drive sweeps around the house, the jewel of the garden is revealed – Ann-Maree's high-octane perennial garden. Further below this is a new 'subdued' garden area, which is being planted with native and endemic species, creating a strong connection with surrounding grassland and distant views.

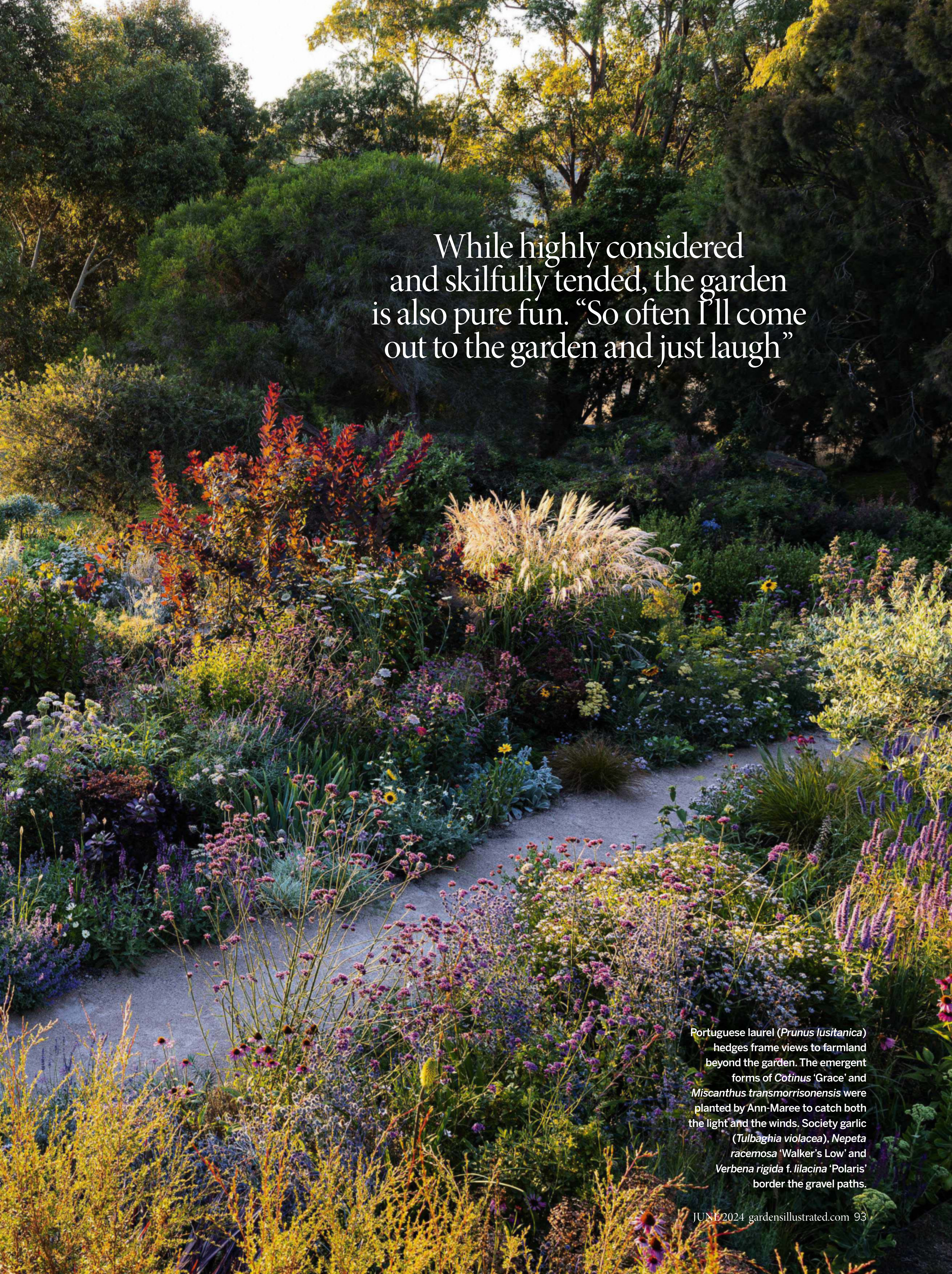
While one of the reasons for the move was to have more space to garden, when Ann-Maree moved in, she says she "spent a lot of time up on the deck of the house looking out, wondering what we'd gotten into and being really intimidated by it". The first summer was very dry, with the clay soil cracking and hot westerly winds ripping up the hill. Anne-Maree's response was to begin planting a windbreak and making an "inner sanctum of over-the-topness" to counter how inhospitable the environment felt.

The site's slope and exposure to harsh winds have been the greatest challenges to the creation of the garden. Ann-Maree placed large rocks to break up the slope, and planted a hedge to protect new plantings from wind and harsh western sun. The stepping of the slope, and buffer plantings, have created a number of ▷

To continue turn to page 94

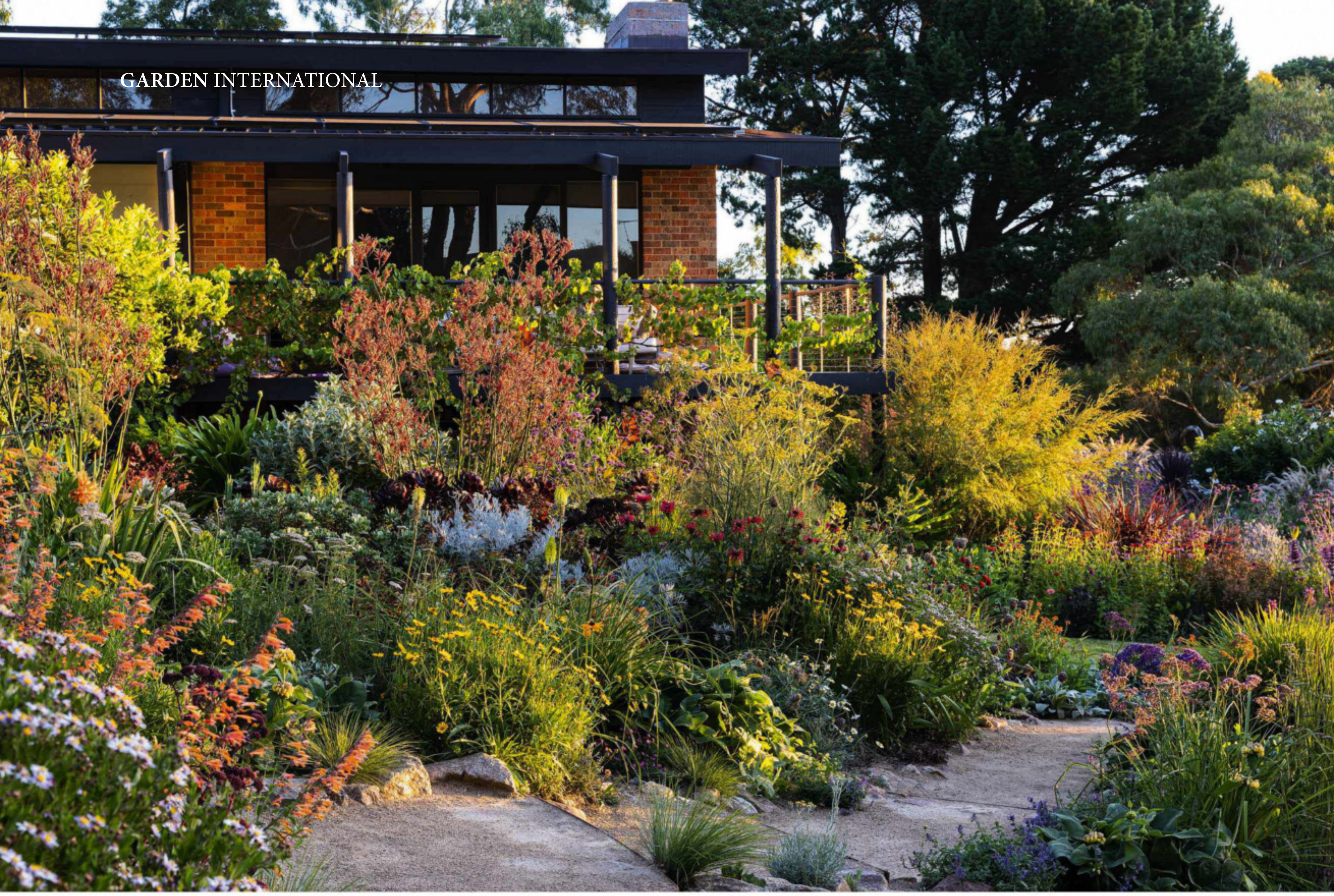
Ann-Maree studied fine art at university and her eye for colour and composition is obvious within her garden. Here, *Agastache aurantiaca* 'Lilac Sprite' and *Echinacea purpurea* are repeated throughout the garden. *Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal' provides vertical interest and illumination.





While highly considered and skilfully tended, the garden is also pure fun. “So often I’ll come out to the garden and just laugh”

Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) hedges frame views to farmland beyond the garden. The emergent forms of *Cotinus* ‘Grace’ and *Miscanthus transmorrisonensis* were planted by Ann-Maree to catch both the light and the winds. Society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), *Nepeta racemosa* ‘Walker’s Low’ and *Verbena rigida* f. *lilacina* ‘Polaris’ border the gravel paths.



▷ different microclimates within the garden, suiting a wide variety of plants. Inspired by local garden designers such as Jo Ferguson [see *Gardens Illustrated* Issue 334, January 2024] and Jac Semmler, Ann-Maree's perennial garden is an experiment in colour, texture and resilience.

More importantly, it's a place of abundance and joy, a salve in challenging times. A few years after they purchased the property, Ann-Maree's husband Paul was diagnosed with lymphoma. "It turned our world inside itself," she says. The garden became an oasis for both of them. "It was good for Paul, because it gave him somewhere to be while undergoing treatment. And in between treatments, he was able to do things in the garden." Then the Covid-19 lockdowns struck. "It was such a weird, dystopian time – we felt very lucky to have this place," Ann-Maree says. "It nurtured us."

She describes the perennial garden, variously, as the "colour bomb" and "jewel box". She approaches colour with a sense of musicality and movement. "I group warm colours and cool colours together in each area, and so even though there's a whole lot of different colours, it's actually transitioning through the spectrum rather than being a mix of the spectrum."

The colour relationships of the entire garden space are considered, not just within particular garden beds. Pops of colour appear in one spot, drawing the eye onwards to another. Colours move in waves within the space. "There's musicality to the garden, with lulls and crescendos that are accentuated by the play of light."

While highly considered and skilfully tended, the garden is also pure fun. "So often I'll come out to the garden and just laugh," says Ann-Maree. "After what we went through, it's such a good thing to have a bit of a laugh and say, 'why don't I put these two together'; 'why don't I do this, or that'. The garden is very much rooted in that sense of unbridled joy."

Now, after nearly ten years of living at the property, Ann-Maree says her approach to the garden, and the place itself, is evolving. While she'll always have her "jewel-box centre", her current approach is less a reaction to the place and more of a conversation with it. She's experimenting with more native plants in the garden, and the paddocks beyond will be planted with endemic species – forming part of an important local vegetation and wildlife corridor.

"My initial approach to planting reflects having gardened a much smaller, suburban space," says Ann-Maree. "I feel differently now. We're hoping to give back to this place. It will be interesting to see how that feeds back into the inner garden. I'm curious to know how it, and I, will change." □

Above Close to the house Ann-Maree has created a warm colour-palette bed featuring red kangaroo paws, coreopsis, *Phlomis russeliana* and *Agastache aurantiaca* 'Copper Rose', with *Monarda* 'Jacob Cline' enjoying a moist area of soil. In the background, endemic *Leptospermum continentale* envelops the deck.

Right above Ann-Maree's high-octane perennial garden offers vibrant pops of colour from a mix of *Salvia leucantha* 'Harry's Red', *Artemisia ludoviciana* 'Valerie Finnis', *Kniphofia* 'Limelight', *Achillea* 'Cerise Queen', *Erysimum* 'Apricot Twist' and *Allium sphaerocephalon*.

Right below In this cooler border, bold forms of *Cordyline australis* 'Purpurea' and *Canna* 'Pink Magic' contrast with the feathery, soft plumes of *Miscanthus transmorrisonensis*, and flowers of *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Dazzler', *Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude', *Echinacea pallida* and *Daucus carota* 'Dara'.

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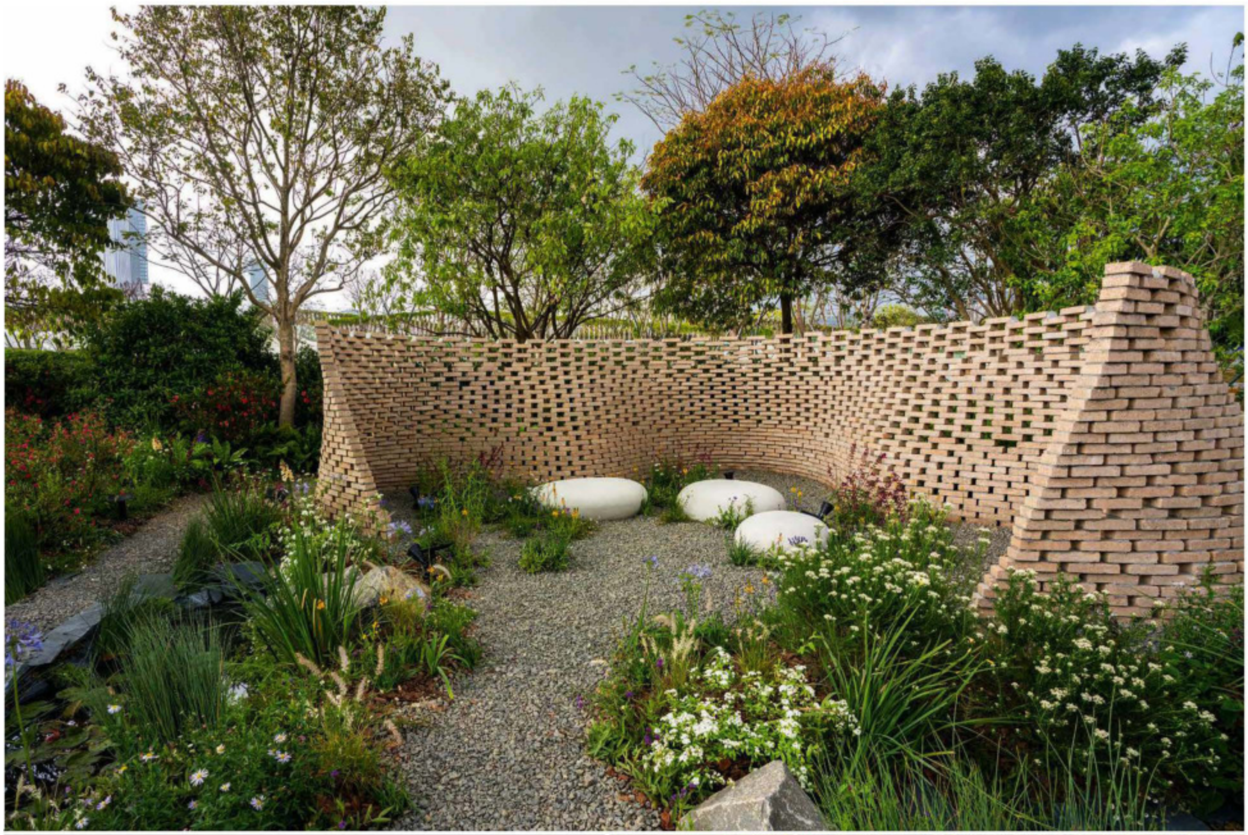
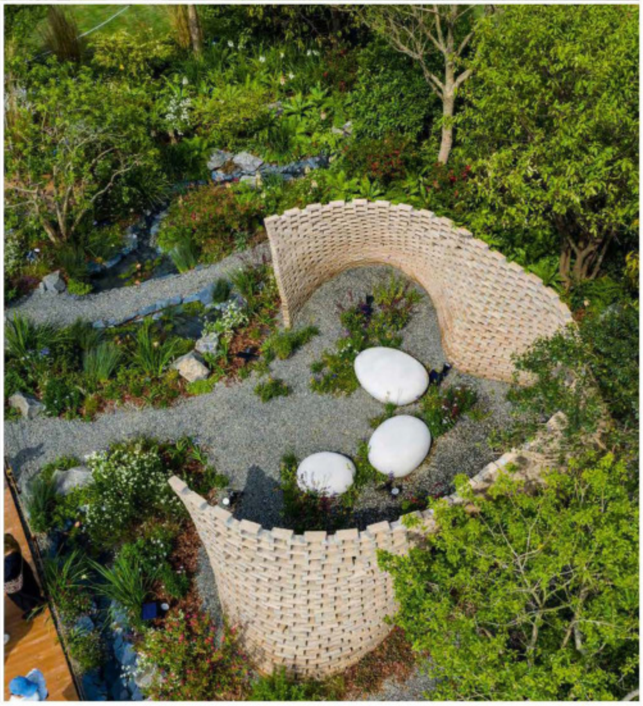


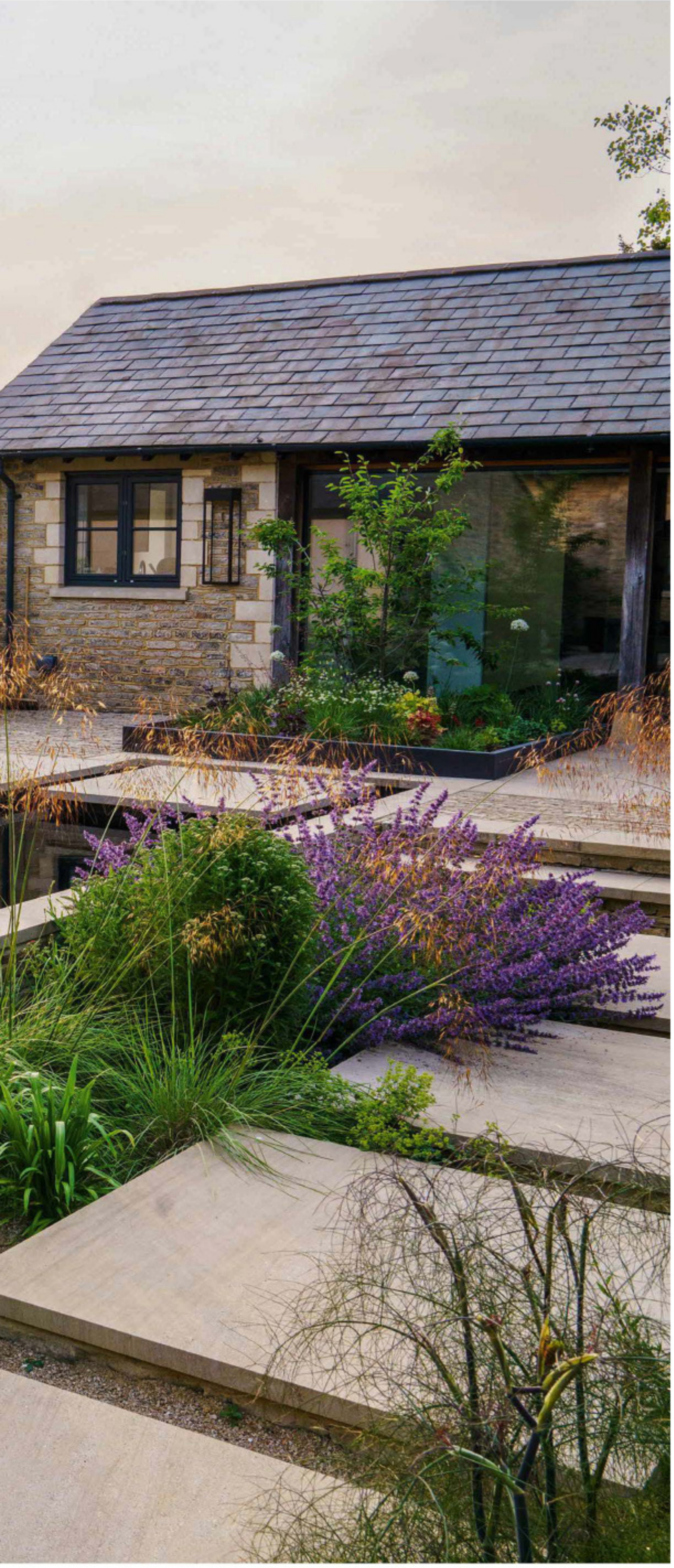
Leaning into technology

Award-winning landscape designer Jo Thompson has been awarded the highest accolade, the Grand Gold Award, at the GBA Shenzhen Flower Show in China. Her show garden, I Live with Nature, included a curved brick pavilion at the centre, which was created in collaboration with Princeton University's Form Finding Lab, and researchers from the Universities of Bergamo and Pegaso, using augmented reality (AR) technology.

This AR technology, combined with traditional bricklaying methods, allowed masons to position the bricks with greater accuracy so that a skilled mason wearing an AR headset was able to place each brick in exactly the right place to achieve perfect leans and geometries.

As a result the walls of the pavilion are able to lean into the central space and also out over the planting, which includes a soft mix of *Spiraea thunbergii*, *Salvia* Love and Wishes (= 'Serendip6') and pale-pink single roses.
jothompson-garden-design.co.uk





STEPS TO SUCCESS

Enclosed within a rustic barn conversion, this courtyard garden contrasts riotous Mediterranean-inspired gravel planting with clean lines and a reflective pool

WORDS **KATE JACOBS** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

The brief

The owners of this Cotswold property had recently retired and downsized from their 18th-century dower house by converting their former barn and other outbuildings into a new home. The house is arranged around a 16m x 12m courtyard, originally a rectangle of scruffy turf, with a central sunken gravel area. "The clients were pretty open in their brief," says landscape and garden designer Angus Thompson. "They just wanted a more elegant version of what they had; something that had to look after itself. For me though, this lovely, closed, southwest-facing courtyard lent itself to other, more exciting treatments."

The design

Angus sees this as a garden of three parts: a lawn quadrangle bounded by a perennial walk; a west-facing 'gin terrace' that captures the evening light; and a courtyard garden. "The first two are calmer areas, serving as counterpoints to the more riotous courtyard," says Angus. His driving idea was that the owners should be able to interact easily with the garden, using it as an alternative route between their bedroom and the kitchen-dining-living area, which are on opposite sides of the courtyard. From this arose the concept of stepping stones, with a row of generously sized. buff stone pavers traversing the heart of this multi-level garden, "appearing to float, as if on water. In fact, they pass among waves of dynamic, Mediterranean-inspired dry garden planting, which suits the courtyard's warm microclimate," says Angus.

Running parallel to the path, a rectilinear and gently burbling pool offers a tranquil, reflective contrast to the planting. Angus raised the terraces that wrap around the house to match the internal floor height, allowing seamless flow between inside and out, while the existing site level changes, of around 800mm, were embraced and help to define different zones within the garden.

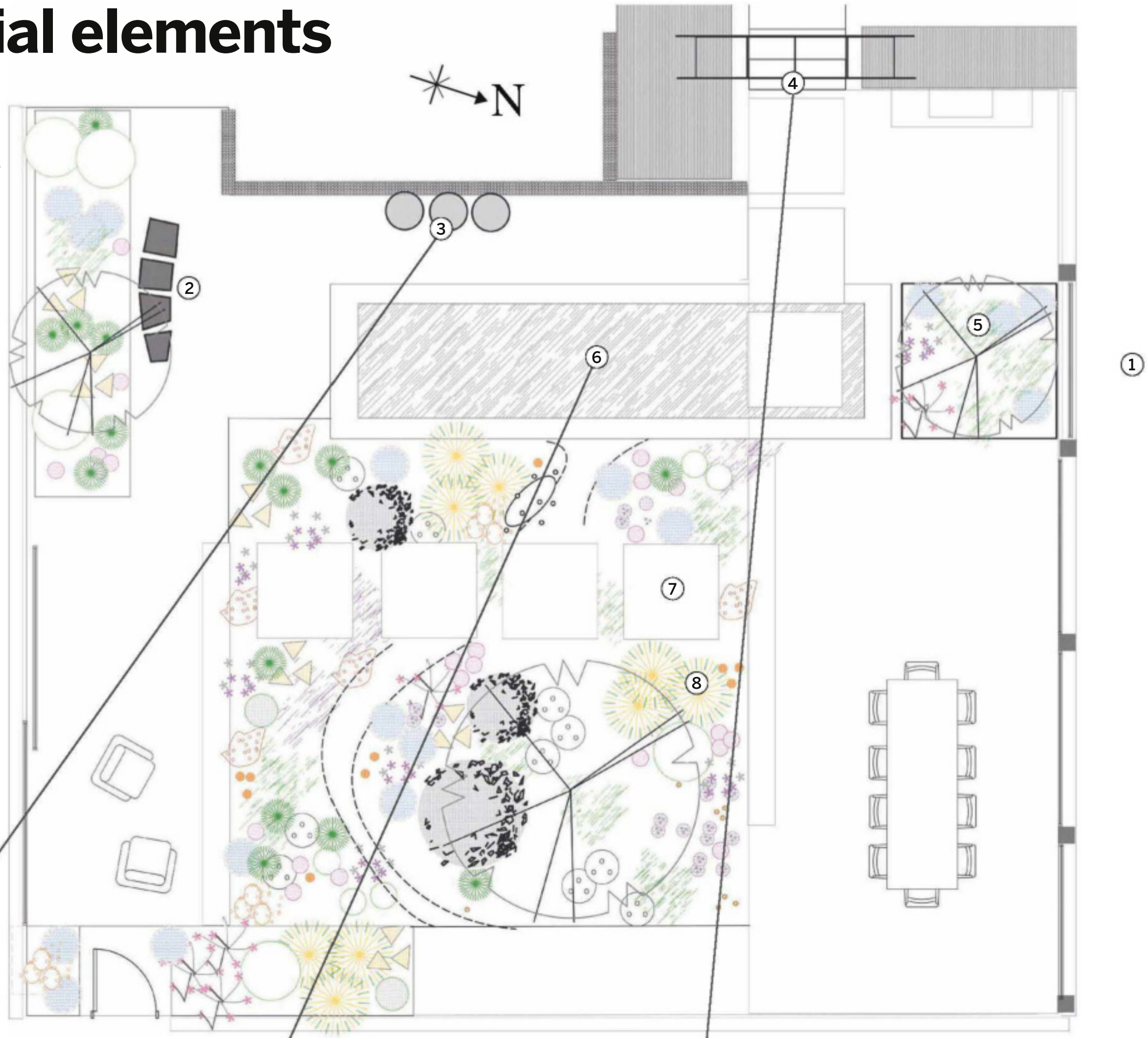
Around the edge of the courtyard, paving provides space for seating and dining areas, interspersed with planting. The outer garden is accessed through an arch leading to the lawn and perennial walk, with a wildflower meadow blurring the boundaries between the garden and the paddock and woods beyond.

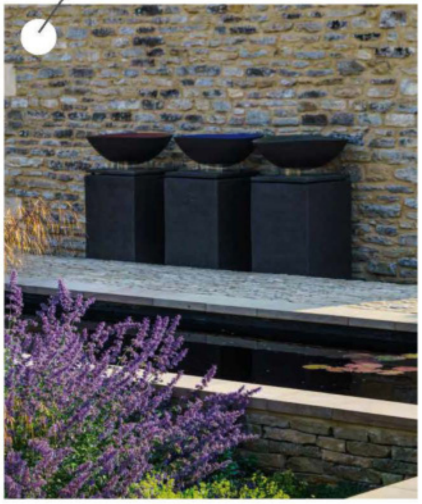
Turn the page for more of Angus's design ideas ▷

Left Contrasting with the clean lines of the stepping stone path and dark, reflective pool, Angus has used a loosely planted Mediterranean-inspired scheme for the sunken gravel areas, combining *Stipa gigantea*, *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low', *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum' and *Digitalis ferruginea*, while mounds of *Taxus baccata* provide year-round structure.

Essential elements

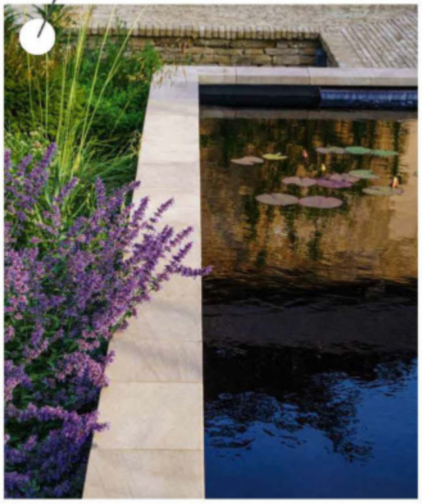
1 House
2 Sculptural seating
3 Trio of decorative pots
4 Archway
5 Raised bed
6 Pool
7 Stepping stones
8 Gravel planting





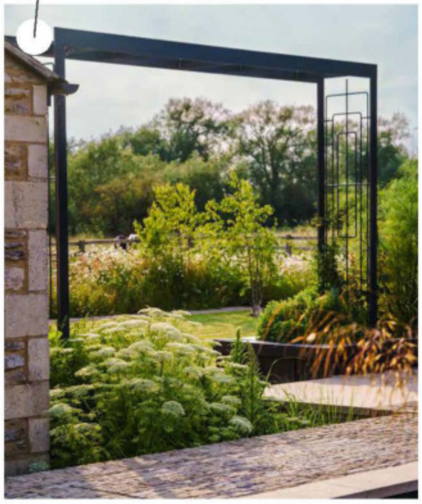
POTS ON PLINTHS

Angus didn't want to cover the attractive stone wall with planting, so instead used a trio of decorative BTV pots on plinths from Atelier Vierkant. The colour of these sculptural elements references the anthracite tones used on the detailing of the house and throughout the garden.



CONTEMPLATIVE POOL

The smooth stone pavers overhang the pool's black fibreglass liner by 30mm, creating an interesting shadow detail. "Because the paving and pool edge are not abutting, there's a sense of lightness to the floating pool coping that mirrors the stepping stones," says Angus.



STYLISH ARCH

The clean, contemporary forms of the bespoke anthracite arch were influenced by the rectilinear plan of the courtyard and the proportions of the house, while anthracite-coloured detailing on the house determined the choice of material.

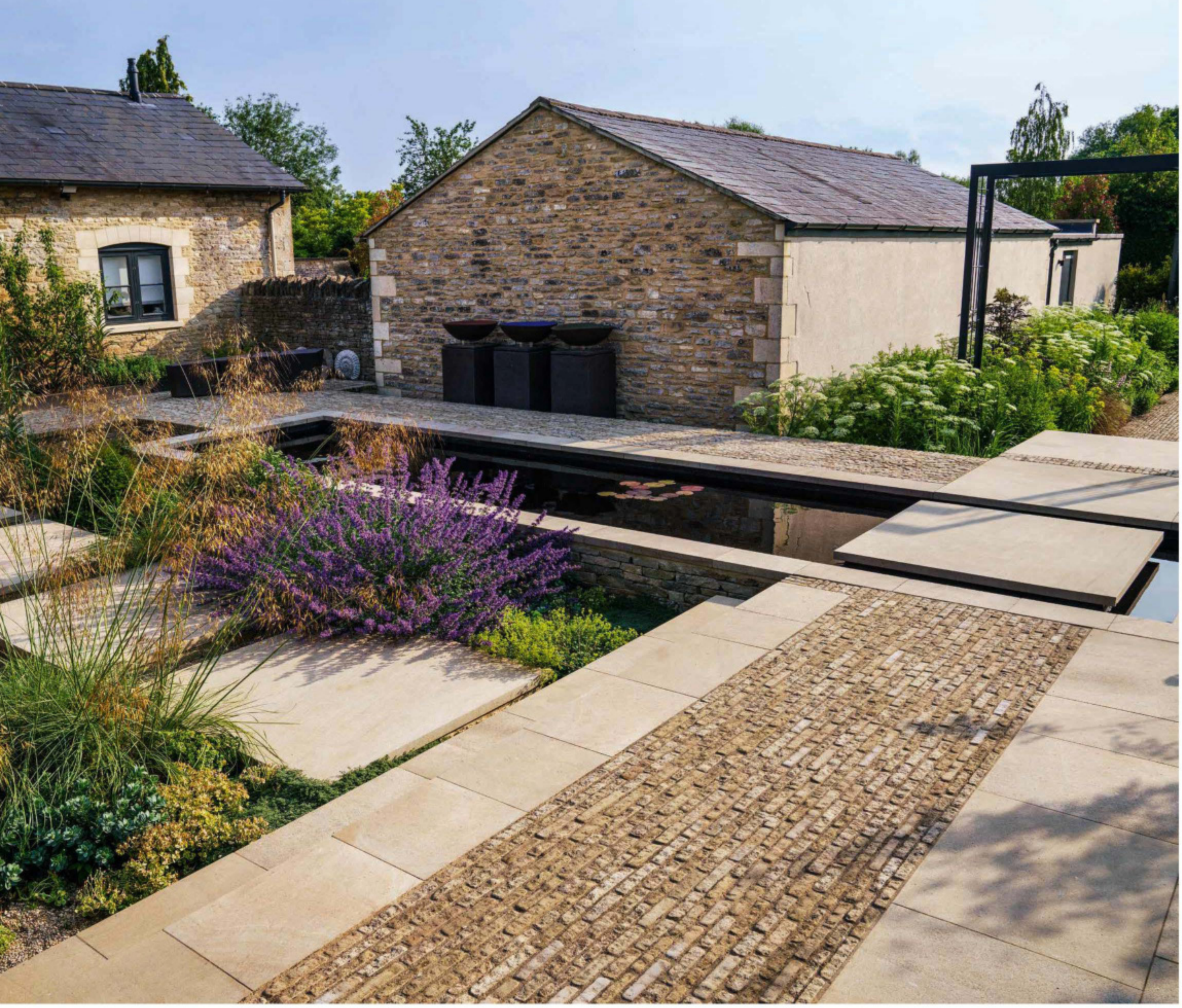
The hardscaping

Angus worked hard to simplify the materials palette, to create a restrained contrast to the planting and the former barn buildings that surround the courtyard, now converted into the clients' home. "For me, the holy grail of design is to not use too many materials. There's a calm, logical rightness in the repetition. I'm governed by trying to choose what sits comfortably with the architecture and the landscape and holds it all together." Here he has used Combedale, a resilient, buff-toned English sandstone from Artorius Faber, in both pitcher and sawn-paver formats. "I enjoy the play of the rough against the smooth, which can also be seen in the converted farm buildings, and which has a softening effect on the overall look. I think if you use beautiful materials sparingly, it allows them to sing."

The owners originally asked for a no-gravel design, so that it wasn't a chore to sweep it back into place, but Angus felt that it would create further textural contrast to use gravel as a top dress mulch and for secondary informal pathways within the areas of exuberant planting. By using a small-grain, self-binding gravel – Raisby Golden from IMAG – and by siting it on the lowest level of the garden, Angus has ensured that there's no gravel creep for the clients to deal with.

Since the house wraps around this courtyard in a horseshoe shape, Angus took the opportunity to place broad stepping stones across the garden, following the desire line between the owners' bedroom and their kitchen-living area. Each carefully proportioned slab of saw-cut Combedale sandstone provides enough space for two treads and is mounted on a dry-stone walling riser, "so that they appear to float. I wanted people to traverse through the planting as if moving over water."

Turn the page for planting solutions ▷



The planting

Angus enjoyed the opportunity to play with height in the courtyard. "I didn't want to be able to see everything from everywhere in the garden, so I started with trees," says Angus. In this case, three multi-stem *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, used alongside masses of *Stipa gigantea*, with its light-catching inflorescences, and hazy mounds of *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'. The diaphanous effects of these plants have been grounded by structural evergreen domes of *Taxus baccata*.

Within the planting palette, Angus honed in on "workhorse plants", such as *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low', *Erigeron karvinskianus* and *Achillea* 'Terracotta', to extend seasonal interest. Green is very much the "base wash", through plants such as *Euphorbia epithymoides*, but with pinpricks of bright colour, including the vivid pink of *Dianthus carthusianorum*, *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus', *Verbena officinalis* 'Bampton' and orange *Pilosella aurantiaca*. "I love a splash of vibrant pink and orange to energise a scheme," says Angus. *Digitalis ferruginea* brings "vertical fireworks", while *Lythrum salicaria* 'Blush' provides another strong accent.

"On each project, I like to use around 75 per cent tried-and-tested plants, but also introduce something new that I think will work well on the site, such as the *Lythrum*, which is a more vertical version than the 'Dropmore Purple' that I've used previously. The umbels of *Cenolophium denudatum* speak of the rural setting. They're a refined version of cow parsley with a long season, and they look good with just about everything else."

Angus is careful to consider smaller, less showy plants within his planting plan. "It's easy to reach for the showstoppers when doing a scheme, but it's good to balance them with plants such as *Calamintha nepeta* and *Alchemilla erythropoda*, for a more complex effect. I've also been experimenting to see what happens when gardens aren't irrigated; then plants don't grow too tall and fall over. The courtyard was a good opportunity to do this on a complete scale."

For the areas under the trees, Angus has used *Heuchera villosa* 'Autumn Bride' and *Briza media* 'Tinkerbell', with its beautiful shaking heads. "What I love about gravel gardens is that it's a loose, painterly way to plant," says Angus. "A lot of these plants will move around through self-seeding; then it just becomes a question of editing." ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Angus Thompson's work at **angusthompsondesign.com**

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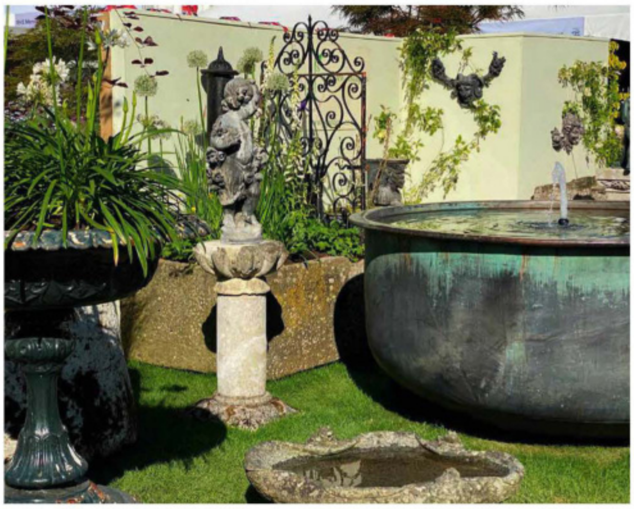

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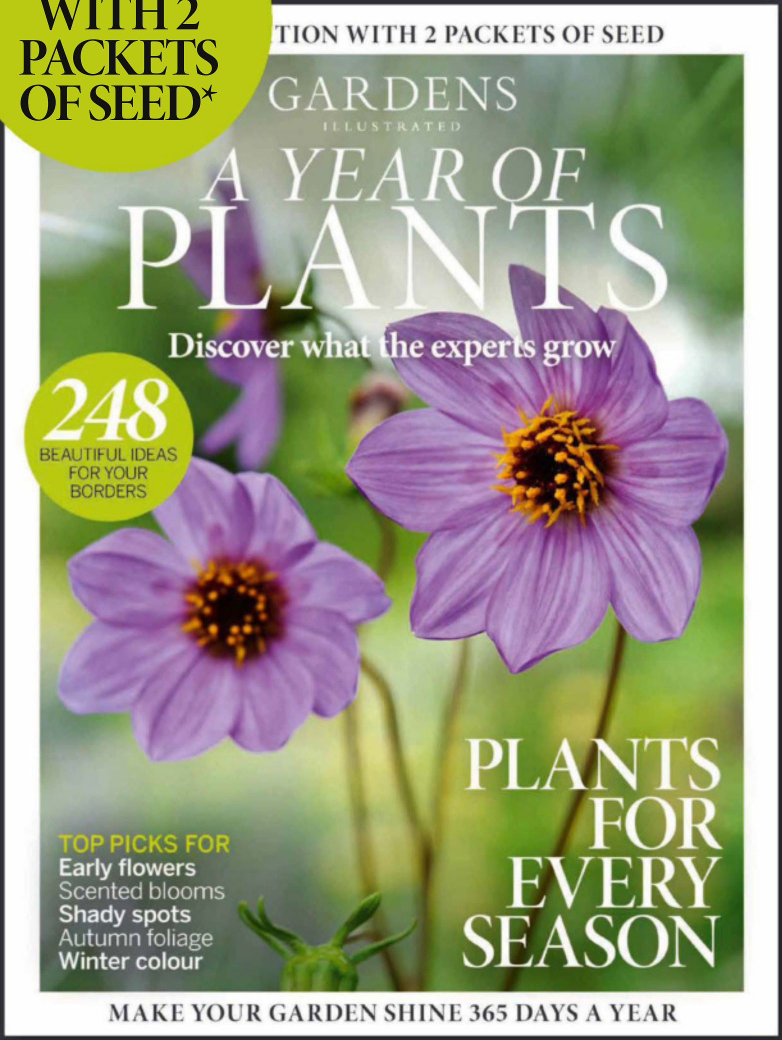
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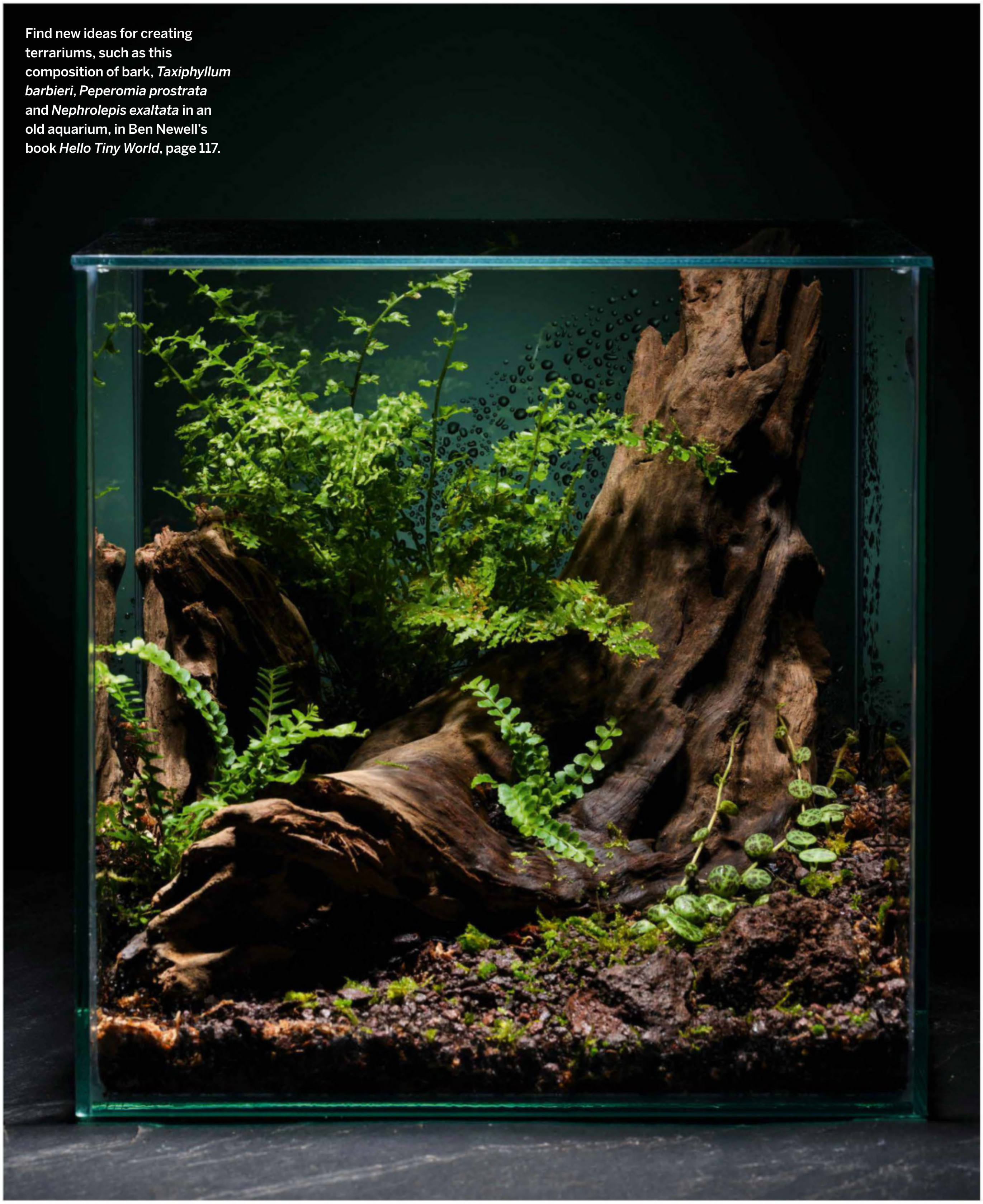
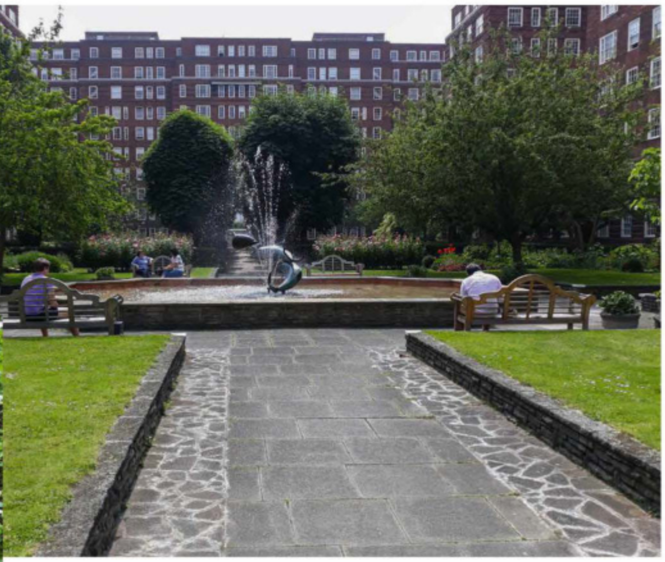
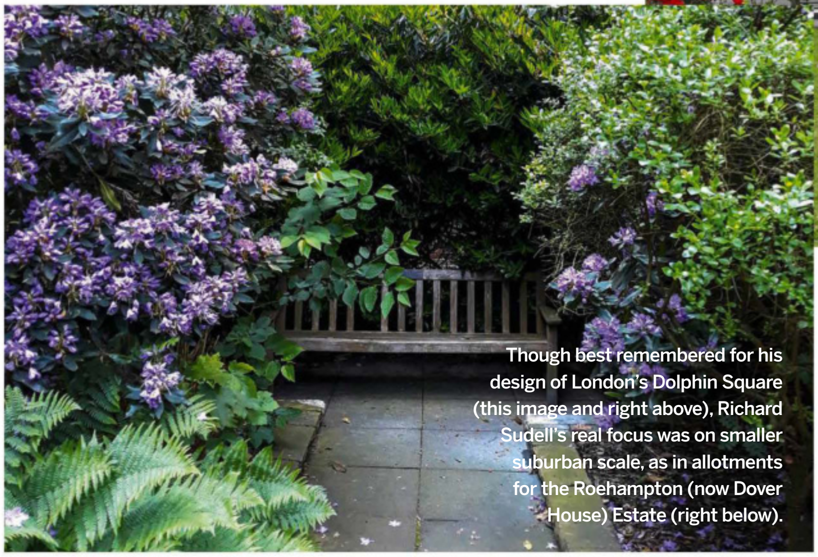
Book reviews, Q&A, the crossword and the big idea



Find new ideas for creating terrariums, such as this composition of bark, *Taxiphyllum barbieri*, *Peperomia prostrata* and *Nephrolepis exaltata* in an old aquarium, in Ben Newell's book *Hello Tiny World*, page 117.

DORLING KINDERSLEY JASON INGRAM AND BEN NEWELL.

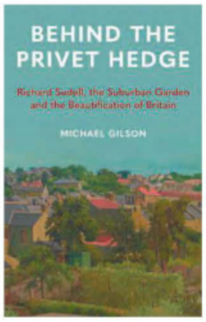




Though best remembered for his design of London's Dolphin Square (this image and right above), Richard Sudell's real focus was on smaller suburban scale, as in allotments for the Roehampton (now Dover House) Estate (right below).

IN SUBURBIA

In this ground-breaking biography, a forgotten figure in 20th-century gardens is remembered as a true activist and small garden advocate, says **Tim Richardson**



BEHIND THE PRIVET HEDGE
Richard Sudell, the Suburban Garden and the Beautification of Britain
MICHAEL GILSON

BEHIND THE PRIVET HEDGE: RICHARD SUDELL, THE SUBURBAN GARDEN AND THE BEAUTIFICATION OF BRITAIN
by Michael Gilson
Reaktion Books, £16.95,
ISBN 978-1789148602

Everyone is an activist now. At least, that is how it seems to me, as so many artists, celebrities and influencers describe themselves in this way. Such faux-activism tends to add up to little more than relentless self-promotion via social media. Not so with Richard Sudell. He was the real thing: a zealous crusader in the cause of gardens for working people.

Having left school at 14 to work as a gardener for eight years, Sudell trained at Kew, was imprisoned as a Quaker conscientious objector in the First World War, and then became a tireless advocate for gardens of any size. He sat on just about every committee going, produced a constant stream of articles and books, designed gardens himself and continually innovated – with ideas such as postal fruit and veg competitions, or gardens on rooftops (he designed one for Selfridges). But he has been almost forgotten. This excellent book rehabilitates and revivifies his reputation.

The author at one point jokingly refers to his subject as 'the champion of crazy paving' – and it is true that Sudell's socialist principles meant that his focus was always on what was achievable by the average home-owner, as opposed to the aspirational daydreaming of Arts and Crafts authors. Sudell explained how to plan a small garden so that it provided produce and also looked beautiful, with plenty of flowers and colour. His interest was not so much in design as what might be termed 'layout'. As such he was not much respected by his contemporaries for his aesthetic taste, and is never mentioned alongside other mid-century landscape-design names such as Geoffrey Jellicoe or Sylvia Crowe. His only major work as a designer was Dolphin Square in London, which has recently been 'saved' and restored.

Neither did Sudell fit in with the horticultural set. He was not a plant nerd in the RHS mould (typical advice: 'avoid rare alpines, especially the diminutive ones'), nor was he an acolyte of the upper-crust gardening cognoscenti. Yet it is clear that this working-class Lancastrian provided balance on the numerous committees on which he sat, even if colleagues found the high-mindedness somewhat wearing at times. The author quotes a letter from Jellicoe, a fellow council member at the Landscape ▷

MICHAEL GILSON

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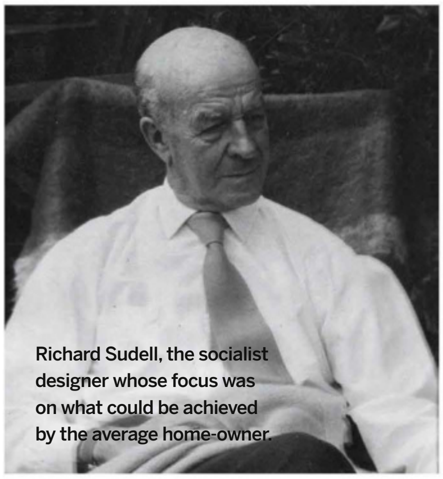

Richard Sudell, the socialist designer whose focus was on what could be achieved by the average home-owner.

COURTESY OF THE SUDELL FAMILY ARCHIVE

My view of the man was altered by the revelation that he habitually wore a rose in his buttonhole

▷ Institute, referring to a disagreement about the landscaping of aerodromes: 'My dear Sudell, I know what you feel… possibly you would come and have a cup of tea.'

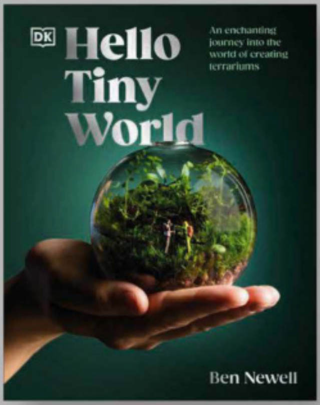
Sudell's working-class understanding of people's liking for traditional houses also set him at odds with the mid-century Modernists – socialists, too, but in their case, single-mindedly pursuing the dream of 'lovely buildings in white and crystal, shining in the clear air', as one zealot put it. Sudell challenged the Modernist and 'preservationist' caricature of the new suburbs as places of snobbish one-upmanship, dull conformity and poor taste. The author points out that 'suburbia' was of course not a single entity: the biggest divider was between council estates and 'speculative' private developments.

The book does an excellent job at placing Sudell's career in context, while not over-praising him, even if it does skim over his private life. My view of the man was altered late in the book by the revelation that he habitually wore a rose in his buttonhole. Clearly he was not dour. He had a scandalous affair, left his wife and remarried. At the very end of the book it is dropped in that this father of four was in fact homosexual.

The politics of community gardening no longer reflects the kind of state-ist socialism advocated by Sudell, but is probably more anarchist in character. Nevertheless, this book could prove to be an inspiration to anyone who wants to affect real change in the world – the kind of person we used to call an activist. ◻

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden historian and critic, and founder-director of the Chelsea Fringe Festival (2012-23).

Recommended reads this month



HELLO TINY WORLD: AN ENCHANTING JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF CREATING TERRARIUMS

by Ben Newell
Dorling Kindersley, £20,
ISBN 978-0241668757

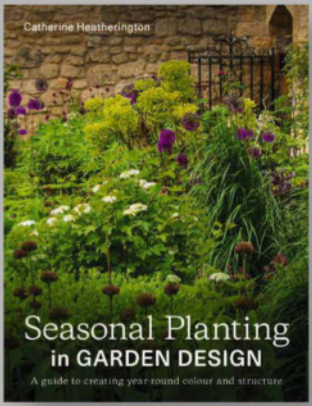
Ben Newell, aka @worcesterterrariums, has amassed more than three million followers on Instagram since giving up work as a postman and devoting himself to terrariums full time. He provides simple, step-by-step advice on how to make, grow and care for your own tiny world.

THIS ALLOTMENT
Stories of growing, eating and nurturing
Edited by Sarah Rigby

THIS ALLOTMENT: STORIES OF GROWING, EATING AND NURTURING

edited by Sarah Rigby
Elliott & Thompson, £14.99,
ISBN 978-1783967889

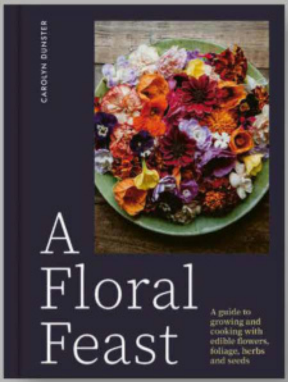
A celebration of allotment life in 12 essays from gardeners, food writers, novelists, horticulturists and historians including Alice Vincent, Olia Hercules, Marchelle Farrell, Sui Searle and allotment historian JC Niala.


Catherine Heatherington
Seasonal Planting in GARDEN DESIGN
A guide to creating year-round colour and structure

SEASONAL PLANTING IN GARDEN DESIGN

by Catherine Heatherington
Crowood, £20,
ISBN 978-0719843891

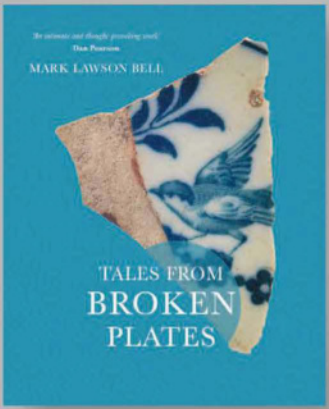
With over 25 years of garden design under her belt, Catherine Heatherington shows how to design a garden in harmony with the seasons that celebrates not only the aesthetics of each month but also nurtures the planet by encouraging biodiversity and climate-adaptive planting.


CAROLYN DUNSTER
A Floral Feast
A guide to growing and cooking with edible flowers, foliage, herbs and seeds

A FLORAL FEAST

by Carolyn Dunster
Pimpernel Press, £22,
ISBN 978-1914902116

The author of *Cut & Dry* explains how to harvest an array of blooms, leaves, flowering herbs and edible seeds from your garden to make tisanes, sweet treats, butters, broths and much more. Includes a directory of 100 edible ornamental flowers, herb and vegetable flowers, flower foliage and flower seeds and the ten key flowering plants that form the mainstay of her own edible garden, including jasmine and nasturtiums.



TALES FROM BROKEN PLATES

by Mark Lawson Bell
Mark Lawson Bell, £30,
ISBN 978-1739489106

If you've ever found broken pottery while digging in the garden and wondered about the story behind it, then this book is for you. Artist Mark Lawson Bell has playfully imagined the last moments of 52 plates before each one met its unfortunate end. Available from talesfrombrokenplates.com or waterstones.com

JASON INGRAM

‘No one ever said gardening was a job option’

The TV presenter, gardener and writer **Frances Tophill** talks about her new book documenting the first growing year in her own small garden

What is your new book about? It is about my garden – the first I’ve ever owned. I moved in in early 2023, and BBC *Gardeners’ World* filmed it. Then BBC Books asked me if I would document the first year of how to tackle a new garden. Initially, I felt I’d have to have something concluded by the end, with a big reveal. But that’s not how I’d approach a new garden. So it is really just the documentation of that first growing season, what I managed to do, and how I approached it.

What did you learn from writing it? It gave me an overview of my gardening journey. I had a very traditional start – as an apprentice at 19, my job was to pick up dog poo and make the head gardener tea. Then at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh I learned about conservation, community gardening and ethnobotany. Slowly, cogs move and you end up miles away from where you began, without really noticing that it’s happened.

What one idea would you like to share from the book? It’s that lesson of not rushing in, and stopping for a year if you possibly can, observing what happens, such as how the light moves through the year. My garden is in full shade in winter, then in March the first peep of sun comes and quickly, the garden’s in full sun in the morning.

What books are on your shelves? For me it is fantasy, adventure – anything that sparks the imagination, so, embarrassingly, I’m listening to *Harry Potter* audiobooks. I also love podcasts. I like Studio Lab, a really good science podcast. A lot of it is botany-based, looking at amazing research that people are doing about plants and plant life.

What sparked your interest in gardening? An appreciation of the natural world is deeply rooted in me, but in terms of it as a practical job, no one ever said it was an option. After school I worked at Marks & Spencer and did a foundation degree in art. Then a gardening apprenticeship came up and I made a snap decision. I walked around the garden with the head gardener and just thought, oh, this is amazing, I want to work here. I realised I like being in soil and muddy and the creativity that doesn’t involve sitting at a desk.

What are you doing in your garden at the moment? My garden is smaller than average (9m x 10m) with morning sun and really nice soil that’s very silty, on limestone, so it’s not acidic. It gets a lot of rain as I’m on the south edge of Dartmoor, but it drains quite quickly. The only thing I created last year was a greenhouse because I have quite a collection of tender pelargoniums and tender edibles such as lemongrass and liquorice. When winter came, I could protect them. I’m now creating more structure, gathering reclaimed bricks for paths, and adding plants.

What is your biggest gardening mistake? My friend Rupert built my greenhouse out of old windows. He came with two magnificent pub windows that were 2.4m and 1.8m across. I put it in a sunny spot so it warmed up but as it was wider than I’d anticipated, it created a tiny little corridor at the far end of the garden, in the sunniest corner, that’s almost unusable. I’m trying to turn it into a little nook of a suntrap. I’ve slowly put some tiles on the floor, and a deckchair, and maybe a hammock. But it is classic mistake – you should never create a wasted space in any garden. Especially in a small garden, and especially in the sunniest part.

Do you have any guilty gardening secrets? I don’t compost. I love compost – I compost at work and it’s the best stuff in the world. In my garden I had one of those little Dalek things but I had to get rid of it as it was a rat’s nest.

What’s your favourite garden to visit? I just love being among trees and love walled and botanic gardens. My favourite garden is probably Sissinghurst, near where I grew up. When you visit a garden as a gardener, you analyse it. But when I go to Sissinghurst, I can switch off that part of my brain, immerse myself in it and imagine, what if I lived here?

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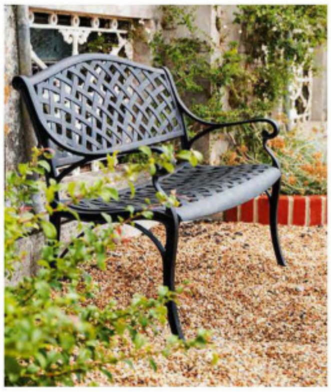

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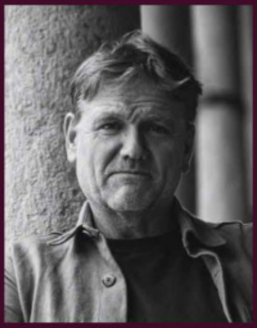
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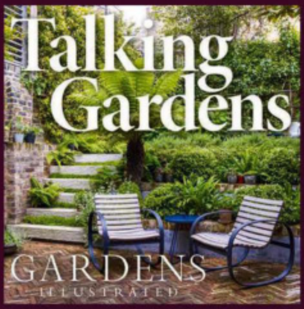

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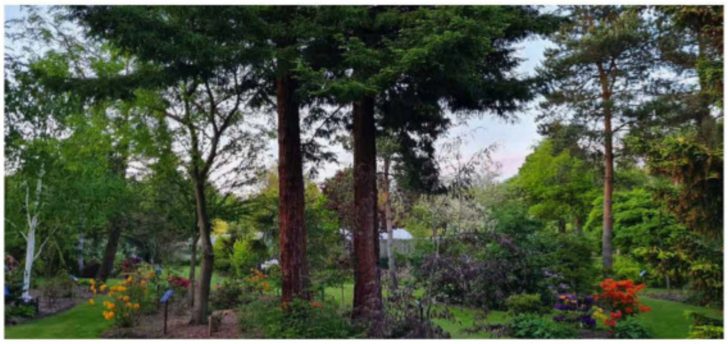

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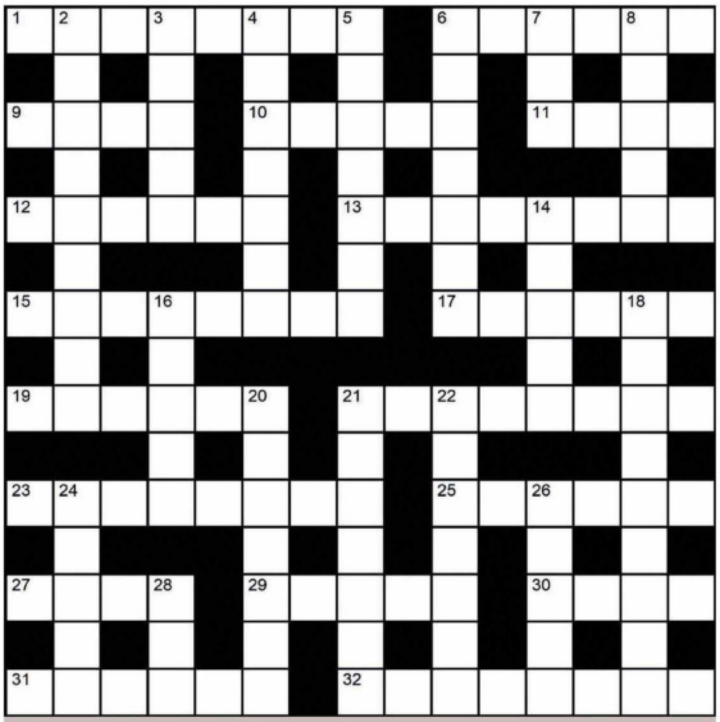

ACROSS
1 Genus of monk's-hood and wolfsbane – Naomi cut badly (8)
6 Encouraged … what the successful cutting did? (6)
9 Knar in tree bark noticed (4)
10 ___ Pagels, German plant breeder (died 2007) – terribly stern! (5)
11 See 3 down
12 Enclosed eg like Mottisfont Abbey's rose garden (6)
13 A very dwarf pea plant aka 'Tom Thumb' – small beer? (4,4)
15 Common name of *Aechmea fasciata* bromeliad with vase-shaped rosette of leaves (3,5)
17 In short, the county location of Trentham Gardens (6)
19 A named *Mahonia* x *lindsayae* hybrid (of a major English university) (6)
21 Common name of *Galega officinalis* – nanny's regret? (5,3)
23 Like a cottage garden, ie not rigidly laid out (8)
25 Fibre in eg apples used to set jams – in retrospect, inedible (6)
27 A cantaloupe type melon with pale-green flesh – gone rotten (4)
29 A named *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* – partly shrub, infertile (5)
30 Hatch a plan for a garden area? (4)
31 Ideal place … for a named phlox with large, lilac-pink flowers (6)
32 One who fancies eg a Peter Beales flower – AA Norris, perhaps (8)

DOWN
2 Genus of knapweed and cornflower – provides a neat cure (9)
3/11 across A common name of trumpet-flowered houseplant, *Clivia miniata* (5,4)
4 Common name of a South American perennial with sky-blue flowers – partly rampant weed, I admit (7)
5 ____ *grahamii*, South American shrub with huge palmate leaves – moth in a tizzy! (7)
6 Sounds of love-in-a-mist seedheads when shaken – baby toys? (7)
7 See 24 down
8 White-petalled *Narcissus* with yellow trumpet – partly excellent! (5)
14 If prickly, they're in *Opuntia* genus not *Pyrus* (5)
16 Paved area of garden close to house (5)
18 Latin epithet meaning 'shrubby' eg *Potentilla* ______ (9)
20 Genus of a 'trailing lily' with red/yellow tubular flowers – or a beam, maybe (7)
21 A *Miscanthus* grass with striped green/yellow leaves – Ingot (4,3)
22 Mountain plants, such as gentians and sedums (7)
24/7 A dark-purple, ruffle-flowered iris – awfully low thing! (5,3)
26 Thorny shrub with edible flower-bud: 'Frolic'? (5)
28 Pinch out part of kniphofia (3)

• Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the July issue

SOLUTIONS TO MAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Charm **4** Odorata **9** Grit **10** Rough **11** Taxa **12** Harcourt **13** Insect **15** Wildly **17** Russelia **19** Leafcurl **21** Atropa **22** Irises **24** Brunette **28** Asset **29** Grey **30** Drifts **31** Casts.

DOWN 1 Cardamine **2** Aztec **3** Mercury **5** Dahlias **6** Rot **7** Toxic **8** Butterfly bush **14** Spear **16** Daffs **18** Impatiens **20** Upstart **21** Aquatic **23/26** Roald Dahl **25** Edges **27** Lei.

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CUSTOMISE YOUR PLANTS

Don't just grow your own – breed your own too, creating 'grexes' bespoke to your garden and resilient in our changing climate, says **Alys Fowler**

ILLUSTRATION ROSANNA MORRIS

Imagine if rather than growing the same variety, you grew a gang, where everyone was a bit different

I can think of no greater way to be truly connected to your garden than to weave yourself into the ecology of the space, by breeding plants that respond both to you and to your garden. It's such a simple idea to grow a garden that responds to you as a gardener, both to your quirks and desires, but also to your place, your soil microbiome, your compost, your sunny corner and your frost pocket. And one of the easiest ways to get there is through creating 'grexes'.

We are all trying to do this one way or another, but from the very beginning, that most simple of gestures – to sow seed – takes us, often unwittingly, further away and not closer to this desire. Because we start with a very, very small gene pool of named seeds, selected many moons ago or recently bred, but seeds that by the nature of the market have been chosen to be uniform, to look, to perform, to mature and harvest alike. Seeds designed to be reliably the same because they have been bred from the same parents. If you want 'Gardener's Delight' tomatoes, you let like cross with like. You don't let 'Gardener's Delight' cross with 'Big Boy' because then your seeds won't be true.

There are plenty of reasons to grow individual cultivars and to preserve these genes and traits. But there are just as many reasons to do it differently. Rather than breeding for sameness, imagine breeding for difference and variation, so the gene pool is ready and adapted for change. Imagine vegetables that don't mind a very dry summer, or a wet one, or need minimal watering, or no feeding. It's not the stuff of dreams. It's an option just around the corner and it could not only transform your garden, but future ones too. It's your chance to be a good ancestor and to give future gardeners the gift of resilience.

Imagine if, rather than growing all the same variety, you grew a gang, where everyone was a little bit different. Then you'd be creating a 'grex'. The term comes from the Latin, for a flock. A 'grex' is a group that has shared characteristics, rather than shared genetics. Or, to put it another way, a 'grex' has multiple hybrid crosses, and so multiple parents, which creates a complex genomic diversity. It might mean you breed a bean with beans that look quite different, some brown, some black, some mottled, but the plants grow in a similar manner, roughly to the same height and like roughly the same conditions. Or, it might mean tomatoes that look very different, some plum, some round, some cherry, all tasting wonderful but never getting blossom end rot.

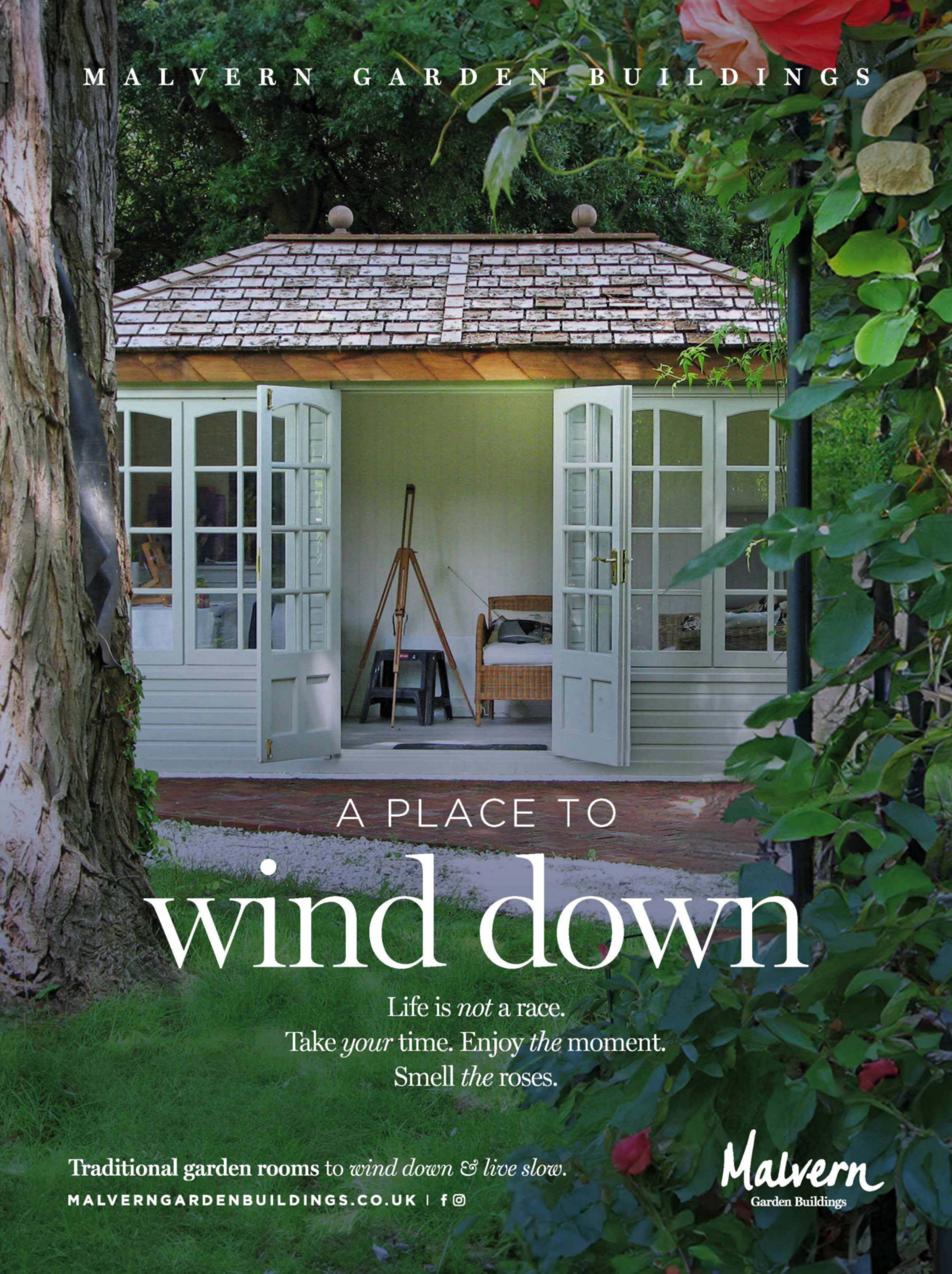
Creating a 'grex' is easy, though it takes a little more time to stabilise the population – maybe five years or so. To begin with, you choose a bunch of varieties of a particular vegetable, each of which has at least one characteristic you want. Then you let them all cross pollinate in their first year. The following year, you sow the seed you saved, grow it, let it cross-pollinate, and remove anything that doesn't work for you. If you want early ripening, you only select plants that do that. Don't want blossom end rot? Then remove anything that gets blossom end rot, and again let them all cross-pollinate. You keep repeating this process, saving, growing, selecting.

Adaptation happens faster in a 'grex' population than in a stabilised variety because it has more possibility for genetic recombination. Once you have a mix you like, you can give it to someone else and they can start to get it to adapt to their soil, thus exercising the gene pool a little more, each time building in more resilience for future gardeners.

The joy and the dream of this breeding method is choosing plants that work directly for you. If you want lettuce that never needs water or a courgette that doesn't need fertile conditions, then ruthlessly select just for that (as well as good taste) and I promise the seeds will adapt. Start off as broad as you can, with as many cultivars as possible in the first year. If you lose a trait, bring that cultivar into the mix again and just keep growing and saving.

No seed company replicates the work of many individuals creating their own 'grexes'. The act of many individuals doing this creates something quite special; it creates a community saving for now and the future, because although the mix has been saved for your exact spot, the complexity of the gene pool means future gardeners get a bigger library to borrow from. It's true life work. □

• Alys Fowler is a horticulturist and garden writer.



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